

STOP



Child Labour
school is the best place to work

CHILD LABOUR FREE ZONES IN SELECTED AFRICAN COUNTRIES A SOLUTION TO THE ELIMINATION OF CHILD LABOUR

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Abstract

Child labour is a common phenomenon in Africa, particularly in the sub-Saharan region where labouring children work for long hours under dangerous and unhealthy conditions, with a lack of physical and social security, and minimal remuneration, and are deprived of the right to education. As children are an abundant and easily exploited source of cheap labour, this increases adult unemployment and decreases adult wages – employers prefer the cheaper option of employing children who are in no position to organise themselves and negotiate for better wages and working conditions. This therefore undermines the bargaining power of adult workers in getting better wages and conditions of employment- a scenario that ultimately results in low household incomes, thereby, keeping families in the clutches of poverty.

In recognition that child labour requires viable, comprehensive and multi-dimensional solutions, spearheaded by a broad social alliance, the 'Stop Child Labour – School is the best place to work' campaign began an international movement aimed at eliminating all forms of child labour and advocating for formal full-time and quality education for all children. It systematically promotes the creation of Child Labour Free Zones (CLFZ) which are "Geographical areas where all children are being withdrawn from all forms of child labour and (re)integrated into formal, full-time schools". The movement encourages all stakeholders at grassroots, national and international levels and across sectors, to work together to ensure that all children enjoy their right to quality education.

This background paper provides an analysis of the CLFZ programme piloted by the Stop Child Labour partner organisations in four African countries, namely: Ethiopia, Ghana, Uganda and Zimbabwe. It describes the common approaches of the African programmes and illuminates the unique interventions of each of the partners which have yielded positive results in the fight against child labour and the provision of education. The paper identifies the barriers to the programme which exist in the countries of implementation which present opportunities for all stakeholders to partake in overcoming. It concludes by proposing recommendations for the enhancement of the CLFZ programme, opportunities for the participation of a multiplicity of stakeholders in eliminating child labour and for the expansion of the programme within participating countries, to the rest of the African region and the world as a whole.

Background and country context

In 2010, the International Labour Organization (ILO) estimated that 215 million children between the ages of 5 and 17 worked worldwide, of which more than half of them were employed in hazardous and worst forms of child labour (like drug-trafficking, sex work, working as child soldier as well as hazardous labour). Although found in all regions of the world, child labour is concentrated in developing countries with Africa having the highest rate of prevalence. The ILO considers child labour particularly exploitative and critical in sub-Saharan Africa due to the socio-economic, cultural, developmental and climatic circumstances of the region. Children living in, for instance, Ethiopia, Ghana, Uganda and Zimbabwe can be found working in agricultural and domestic labour and in informal economic sectors, with much of the work done within household systems of production. Most children in these four countries combine economic and non-economic work. Among school-going children at least 33% of boys and 40% of girls are engaged in part-time economic activities.

Research reveals that the types and amount of work children do largely depends on their location in the country. In the rural areas, agricultural work accounts for almost all of

children's domestic activity. Here they herd cattle, gather firewood, fetch water and take care of smaller children, and are involved in the production of food crops. Those children found in commercial farming, work in the production of cash crops (for instance in Zimbabwe, Ghana, and Uganda) and in the fishing industry (Uganda and Ghana). In urban areas, children are engaged in hawking, portering, manufacturing, mining and quarrying, fishing, welding, spray painting, night work, and drug peddling. In both urban and rural areas, most of the working children's economic activity is within their own families, although those living in urban areas are more likely to be involved in paid work compared to their rural counterparts.

The common causes of child labour in these four countries include HIV and AIDS causing orphanhood and vulnerability; high costs of schooling; cultural and social perceptions of the role of children; gender discrimination; migration and child trafficking; poor educational opportunities particularly in rural areas; the predominantly agro-based economy of African countries which requires intensive labour; and the low costs of employing children. Poor quality of education also plays a significant role in family decisions to send their children to work.

Stop Child Labour International Movement – towards Child Labour Free Zones

Most interventions against child labour typically take a sector-based approach – focusing on prevention of child labour in specific sectors or worst forms of child labour rather than targeting all forms of child labour. The linking of the prohibition of child labour with the provision of quality full time education and the involvement of a range of stakeholders representing a multiplicity of sectors, forces and social classes, each having a complimentary role to play in the fight against child labour. A lot of programmes addressing child labour often take a rigid 'one-size-fits-all' approach which often does not allow for home-grown solutions (even if guided by the international principles) adapted to the peculiarities and realities of the areas in which they are being implemented. This has often resulted in the limited support and lack of meaningful involvement of relevant stakeholders in the elimination of child labour or the fragmentation of interventions of various players.

Stop Child Labour has taken cognisance of the need for an integrated approach to child labour and embarked on an international advocacy, education and awareness raising movement to eliminate child labour, founded upon international child rights principles enshrined in ILO, UN and AU international instruments, which prohibit all forms of child labour, and enshrine the right of every child to at least the age of 15 to regular full-time and quality education.² Stop Child Labour calls for the creation of Child Labour Free Zones (CLFZ) which are – geographical areas where all children are systematically withdrawn from all forms of child labour and (re) integrated into formal, full-time schools with an emphasis on the provision of quality education.

Stop Child Labour draws its inspiration from the Indian Mamidipudi Venkatarangaiya Foundation (MVF), which has, for the past 20 years, managed to get more than 1,000,000 working children back into school, through a multi-disciplinary and integrated-area-based model of intervention which targets

all forms of child labour prevalent in well-defined geographical areas. All stakeholders across sectors and social classes (e.g. teachers, parents, children, unions, community groups, local authorities and employers) are encouraged to get involved in the movement to eliminate child labour and ensure all children receive quality education.

The CLFZ programme is guided by the Non-Negotiable Principles developed by MVF which state that: 1) all children must attend full-time formal day schools; 2) any child out of school is a child labourer; 3) all child labour is hazardous and harms the overall growth and development of the child; 4) there must be total abolition of child labour; 5) any law regulating child work is unacceptable; 6) and any justification perpetuating the existence of child labour must be condemned.

Stop Child Labour therefore advocates for all children to follow regular daytime classes and believes that non-formal education should only be used to help child labourers' transition back into the formal school system. The campaign calls for direct integrated approaches which include special attention for the specific problem of girls' labour and exclusion/exploitation of other minority groups and their return to formal education.

While acknowledging that poverty influences the decision of parents/guardians to send their children to work, Stop Child Labour rejects the philosophy that poverty causes child labour. Child labour perpetuates poverty by causing underdevelopment, and undermining the opportunities for adult employment and decent wages as employers prefer to contract children because they are cheaper and more obedient. This position is supported by the study conducted by FNV Mondiaal in 2010, which found that "where almost all child labour is eradicated (not only the worst forms) adults can substantially improve their wages and improve their chances of obtaining decent work..."³ The programme therefore focuses on changing attitudes about child labour, and stresses the importance of education.⁴

²Namely, the ILO Minimum Age Convention 138; ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention 182; UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

³FNV Mondiaal 'Let parents earn and children learn' Final report November 2010, page 5.

⁴See also Stop Child Labour position paper 2012: <http://www.stopchildlabour.org/Stop-Childlabour/Repository/Policy-documents-and-recommendations>.

Child Labour Free Zone Programmes in Africa

Stop Child Labour supports local partners to eliminate child labour in six African countries, namely, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Morocco, Uganda and Zimbabwe (and will soon include Burkina Faso, Mali and Senegal), where various local partner organisations have joined the movement and begun to implement the CLFZ programme. This background paper, however, focuses on the work of the Stop Child Labour partners in Ethiopia, Ghana, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

In Zimbabwe, the Stop Child Labour partner is the Coalition Against Child Labour in Zimbabwe (CACLAZ). This comprises the Progressive Teachers' Union of Zimbabwe (PTUZ), the General Agricultural Plantation Workers Union of Zimbabwe (GAPWUZ) and the African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN), a child rights NGO. It was designed as a lobby and advocacy platform from which to raise the issues of child labour while improving access to education for all the children in Zimbabwe. Operating in Uganda is Kids in Need (KIN), an NGO that began as a street children's service provider and later evolved into a child rights organisation specialising in child labour. The General Agricultural Workers' Union (GAWU) is one of the largest trade unions in Ghana that has been involved in a nation-wide campaign against child labour in collaboration with various local and international partners.⁵ In Ethiopia, there are three NGOs that have been implementing the CLFZ programme, namely, the Forum on Sustainable Child Empowerment (FSCE), WABE Children's Aid and Training (WCAT) and African Development Aid Association (ADAA). FSCE promotes the rights and protection of children, particularly children in difficult circumstances and at risk of engaging in child labour. ADAA is an organisation that seeks to develop the capacity of poor communities to become self-reliant and to upgrade their standard of living using integrated community development approaches. WCAT works with children from marginalised families and community groups in order to improve their wellbeing through education and skills training and integrated development activities.

COMMON APPROACHES/STRATEGIES OF AFRICAN SCL PARTNERS IN IMPLEMENTING THE CLFZ PROGRAMME

Guided by the Non-Negotiable Principles, these African partners introduced the CLFZ programme in various geographical sites within their respective countries. They targeted areas with high child labour prevalence and high school dropout rates and poor school attendance. Through a multi-disciplinary and integrated area-based model of intervention, they have targeted all forms of child labour prevalent in their areas of operation.

The partners launched their programmes by going through a process of social awareness on the dangers of all forms of child labour, with the aim of persuading all stakeholders (who include child labourers, school children, parents, teachers, community leadership, employees, employers, unions and the government) that all forms of child labour is unacceptable and 'school is the best place to work'. The idea has been to shift the entrenched societal attitudes that condone child labour to promote education of all children as a right. This process is also aimed at making communities realise that education, as an empowerment right, would enable economically and socially marginalised adults and children to extricate themselves from the cycle of poverty and obtain the means to participate fully in their communities. The movement in Africa thus takes cognisance of the inextricable link between the elimination of child labour and the provision of good quality education up to the minimum age for entering into employment (as reflected in international law)⁶, specifically ILO Convention 138 on Minimum Age of employment. All partners have therefore focused on promoting access to formal, full-time and quality education for children by forming partnerships with schools and government departments of education in the CLFZ which would provide the necessary education for all children in the area and would also partake in the awareness-raising about child labour among children and parents (e.g. the Parents Teachers Associations) and the entire community as a whole.

⁵Such as ILO's Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV), ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) and LO-Norway (Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions).

⁶L Guarcello, S Lyon & FC Rosati 'Child Labour and Education for All' 1:2 (2008) *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 254 at 255.

While it impresses upon all stakeholders to be involved in the provision of quality education of children, Stop Child Labour and the local implementing partners acknowledge that government has the main responsibility to ensure the provision of quality education. It also stresses that non-formal education may only serve as a bridge to the formal education system, and therefore calls for the strengthening of the formal education system where all child labour returnees should eventually be (re)integrated.

The African partners have created links with existing social support networks, community leadership, and school administrations and capacitated them to promote children's rights and take the lead in addressing child labour through awareness raising activities and social mobilisation. They have introduced school clubs where children debate, write poems and use drama to raise awareness on the dangers of child labour and the benefits of education. They have also attempted to enhance the capacity of national stakeholders to tackle child labour through training and awareness raising activities.

By doing so, the African partners encourage and promote consensus building around the norm that 'no child should work – every child should be in school' and advance the argument that child labour must become a shared problem and the education for all children a joint responsibility of all stakeholders. The essence of the movement is to build a social norm and community ownership, mobilise government support and advocate for strengthening the government systems particularly in the provision of quality education.

While this has been the general approach of the Stop Child Labour partners in the four African countries, each partner also takes cognisance of the peculiarities and realities of the areas and countries in which they are operating and employed additional innovative strategies to eliminate child labour and provide quality education as well as expand the awareness of child labour and of the CLFZ programme beyond their geographical areas of operation. Such strategies have been cited as the strengths of these programmes. The following section outlines the additional interventions which the partners have incorporated into their CLFZ programmes.

COUNTRY SPECIFIC APPROACHES AND STRENGTHS

ZIMBABWE

Coalition Against Child Labour in Zimbabwe (CACLAZ)

Since 2007, CACLAZ has been tackling child labour in communities of the selected CLFZ in Zimbabwe. In addition to the common approaches, the most notable strategies that CACLAZ has employed to address child labour in the selected zone include: the introduction of incubation schools; promotion of school infrastructural development; provision of school fees and uniforms to poor children; campaigning against child marriages; and assistance in obtaining birth certificates.

Incubation Centres: To ensure access to education for out of school children engaged in child labour, the Coalition has been working towards the introduction of incubation centres where former child labourers who have been out of the formal school system for prolonged periods, will spend at least 6-18 months being oriented and prepared for reintegration into the formal school system. The reintegration will be based on the assessment of each individual child's readiness for formal schooling. It will not be a parallel school programme but will be synergistic and complementary and fit into the existing school structures. CACLAZ is currently in the process of identifying children to benefit from this programme in collaboration with an international organisation and relevant Ministries.

School infrastructural development: CACLAZ realises that the poor infrastructure of the schools in the CLFZ programme is a disincentive for both parents in returning their children to school and for attracting good teachers to the district. Starting with one of the primary schools in the CLFZ, CACLAZ has mobilised the community to build classrooms to replace the make-shift ones and hence improve the schooling environment. The community has in turn taken ownership of the cause and collectively provided the building materials and the labour required in building proper classrooms.

School fees and uniform assistance: CACLAZ realised that lack of school fees is the biggest barrier to school enrolment and retention in the CLFZ. It has therefore formed strategic partnerships with organisations which are assisting children from poor families, particularly HIV/AIDS orphans, to pay school fees and purchase uniforms as well as to mobilize the community to mobilize resources to support their children.

Campaign against early marriages: Early marriages are rampant in the CLFZ and CACLAZ has taken an aggressive approach to stamp out the practice. Early marriage often forces girl children to drop out of school and engage in child labour in their husbands' homes. CACLAZ has thus partnered with the Police's Victims' Friendly Unit to enforce the legal prohibition of early child marriages (and child exploitation) and encouraged schools to monitor the attendance of children at risk and report any cases of child marriages to the Police.

Access to enabling documentation: The coalition has also taken cognisance of the fact that one of the barriers to school enrolment as well as children's access to some services and assistance is the lack of enabling documentation - birth certificates. CALCAZ is therefore assisting children in the CLFZ to obtain birth certificates.

Structure of Coalition: A notable strength of the CLFZ programme in the country lies in the very structure of CACLAZ. The members have evidently complemented each other's efforts. The Progressive Teachers' Union of Zimbabwe (PTUZ) has successfully advocated for all aspects of the better quality of education so that those children receive an education which will equip them with the necessary tools to become productive citizens. The General Agricultural

Plantation Workers Union of Zimbabwe (GAPWUZ) - a farm workers' trade union, has scored successes in encouraging farmers to release children from work and organize for better working conditions and opportunities for adult workers in the CLFZ and in agriculture as a whole. The African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN) – an NGO working to eliminate child abuse and neglect, has managed to raise awareness on child labour and mobilised communities in the CLFZ for more action against child labour. Indeed, this tripartite arrangement has guaranteed the maximum performance of the coalition and impact of the programme.

UGANDA

Kids in Need (KIN)

KIN has since 2008, been implementing the CLFZ programme in 3 villages two of which are in an urban area and one in a rural area. These three areas all had high numbers of children engaged in child labour activities. In Uganda, the strengths of KIN's CLFZ programme lies in its urban and rural coverage of the CLFZ programme; its formation of community child labour monitoring systems; advocacy among employers and supporting children from vulnerable households with scholastic materials. The introduction of income generating programmes and Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLA) groups have strengthened household economic security thus enabling parents to meet the education needs of their children.

Coverage of programme: The coverage of the programme in both rural and urban areas shows an acknowledgement that child labour affects both urban and rural children and should be abolished in both areas. Targeting both urban and rural areas and adapting the programme to the different needs and environments of the locations, has widened the reach and impact of the CLFZ programme in Uganda and is a perfect example of how the programme may be expanded within a country.

Formation of community monitoring engines: These comprise of different members of the community including teachers, employers, local leaders, religious leaders and parents. Together they make a child labour free zone committee which acts as a child rights protection forum for the community. Committee members are trained and their capacity strengthened to enable them address and handle cases of child abuse in the community. They also closely monitor the area to see that no more children are engaged in child labour.

Income Generating Activities (IGAs) and Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) groups: Another one of KIN's notable strategy for addressing child labour is through empowering parents or guardians from extremely poor families inputs in kind through IGAs. The programme was intended to assist adults to generate income for meeting household livelihood needs. KIN also supported households to establish VSLAs that enable household members to save and borrow loans for investing in micro enterprises and meet health and education needs of children.. Evidence from KIN shows how improved household economic security through IGAs and VSLAs can contribute to prevention of child labour.

Advocacy among employers: KIN's advocacy against the employment of children and the improvement of working conditions for adults, has also led to children being released back into school and the employers themselves becoming the champions of the drive to eliminate child labour at the places of work. This has created opportunities for the employment of adults, thereby increasing household income.

Provision of scholastic materials: KIN acknowledges that the free education policy in Uganda only goes as far as encouraging school enrolment but not the retention of children in school. The reason is that the free education policy covers school fee waivers only and not learning materials whose costs parents find prohibitive. KIN therefore provides scholastic materials to children from vulnerable households within the CLFZs. Such an approach therefore illustrates the need for government to take a holistic approach to the free education policy.

Life skills and vocational training programme: To address the exploitation of older children who are out of school, KIN has also initiated the life skills and vocational training programme to equip them with the tools and skills to engage in productive employment opportunities. This programme targets children above the minimum age of employment while the rest are reintegrated back into schools to complete their primary education.

GHANA

General Agricultural Workers' Union (GAWU)

GAWU has been involved in a nation-wide campaign against child labour in collaboration with various local and international partners. The strength of GAWU's CLFZ programme lies in the: unionising of farmers; advocacy at a national level (in parliament); creating strategic partnership with the media; public opinion surveys on its CLFZ programme; and mass action against child labour.

Unionising of informal employees: GAWU recognised that most working children are found in informal employment, and hence has taken the initiative to unionise farmers and other rural workers within the informal economy under its Rural Workers Organisational Programme (RWOP). These unions campaign against child labour in a sector where the work of children is generally unregulated and where children are most vulnerable to exploitation. This has proved to be effective in keeping children out of work while also improving the working conditions of adults and their employment opportunities. The local farmers union has also helped create alternative income generating activities to supplement family incomes and increase food security. Parents are now able to afford purchasing uniforms and learning materials for their children.

Advocacy in parliament: GAWU has been lobbying parliamentary committees to urge relevant government ministries to reform their policies on child labour and education and implement them. Through such advocacy activities, GAWU has created an opportunity to influence law makers who have an oversight function over the executive

arm of government. Law makers are in a position to compel the relevant ministries to reform their policies and to actually implement them. By so doing, GAWU is reminding government of its responsibility to stamp out child labour as well as make provision for quality education.

Strategic partnership with media; public opinion surveys and mass action: Taking advantage of the media is an astute strategy which GAWU is using to get its messages across to as wide an audience as possible. The use of this medium of communication means that GAWU reaches a wider area of the country and higher numbers of people about the dangers of child labour and the importance of school and creates awareness of the CLFZ programme itself. The public opinion surveys that GAWU carries out to keep abreast with how the public is receiving their messages, helps inform their advocacy strategies and the areas of concern they need to attend to. This can be an effective monitoring and evaluation strategy of the CLFZ programme. The public demonstrations and picketing which GAWU occasionally organises to compel employers to employ adults may get children out of work and into school. Together, these strategies create opportunities for awareness-raising about child labour on a national scale, and for all stakeholders in the country to partake in the development and expansion of the programme.

ETHIOPIA

In Ethiopia, FSCE, ADAA and WCAT have been implementing the CLFZ programme in different communities using a similar approach of community awareness and capacity building of stakeholders – encouraging them to take the lead in the fight against child labour and the provision of education. Combined, the strength of the three SCL partners implementing the CLFZ programme lies in their heavy focus on improving access to education with the establishment of Alternative Basic Education (ABE) centres in the intervention areas. ABE is a form of non-formal education that may be taken as a foundation for further life-long learning for those who are not reached through the formal schooling system of relevant skills training opportunities. It is an opportunity for children unable to access formal schooling to benefit from alternative educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs such as literacy, numeracy, oral expressions and problem-solving. This strategy has been used by the partners to address the problem of access to education for: children at risk of child labour because of a lack of schools; children who would have dropped out to engage in labour and those unable to access education due to their vulnerabilities. It therefore has an inclusive education element that caters for children with disabilities and girl children often deprived of education due to harmful cultural practices. The partners have thus been involved in the development of such centres. The Non Formal Education as is given at the ABE centers is officially recognized by the Government. Completion of three years Non Formal Basic Education at ABE centers gives the right to access to level 5 of Formal Schools. The experience with the ABE centers created by FSCE, ADAA and WCAT so far shows that most children that have graduated from ABE centers transition into nearby Formal Schools.

African Development Aid Association (ADAA)

Apart from its involvement in the development of ABE centres, ADAA has campaigned in communities against harmful traditional practices which perpetuate child labour and hinder access to education; and livelihood interventions which address food insecurity.

Addressing harmful traditional practices in communities: In Ethiopia, as in the rest of Africa, children are expected to work and hence often find themselves in harmful labour as a result of these societal expectations. Girl children are vulnerable to harmful traditional practices such as premature marriages and female genital mutilation (FGM) which affects their health and subsequently their ability to attend and complete school. ADAA campaigns against such harmful traditional practices through community mobilisation and awareness raising campaigns.

Livelihood interventions to enhance food security: ADAA acknowledges that food security is a crucial variable in improving the wellbeing of children both in and out-of-school. ADAA thus introduced and supports livelihood interventions in the communities within the CLFZ to boost food production. This is intended to ensure that children are sent to school instead of participating in food production as well as ensure that children have adequate food to enable them concentrate in class.

Strategic partnership: ADAA has also managed to garner the support of Education Bureaus, Teachers' Associations and traditional and religious leaders which have participated in community mobilisation efforts, and training of teachers to ensure effective delivery of quality education.

Forum on Sustainable Child Empowerment (FSCE)

Since 2008, FSCE has been implementing the CLFZ programme in Adama in Oromia, Ethiopia where they have targeted children in difficult circumstances and at risk of the worst forms of child labour such as sexual exploitation, street children, neglected children, children in conflict with the law and other vulnerable children who are living in poverty.

Multi Stakeholder Child Protection System (MSCPS): FSCE uses the community-based Multi Stakeholder Child Protection System in establishing CLFZs. This model is a system that promotes maximum partnership and participation of the community, government organs, NGOs, community based structures, families and children for the protection of children. The system engages relevant stakeholders and existing community structures towards improving situations of children. It is an approach that focuses on local knowledge and expertise to support and bring change on child protection, people and organisations that understand their own society intimately and are able to bring sustainable social change. Through the model, the programme creates corporate responsibility for achieving child protection goals such as the elimination of all forms of child labour. The approach is used to understand the problem, to plan, to implement and to monitor actions by all stakeholders.

Stakeholders Child Protection Council: The Multi Stakeholders Child Protection System is led by a Multi Stakeholders Child Protection Council that oversees the implementation of the project. On the second level of the hierarchy is the MSCPS Executive Committee which is made up of 7 members. On the third level are different groups and sub-committees that include the community conversation group, counter child trafficking and migration committee, Iddirs⁷ coalition, school based and out of school clubs, community based arbitrators, health extension committee and Parents Teachers Association.

Role of Education to eliminate all forms of child labour: Through the CLFZ programme, FSCE advocates for the elimination of ALL forms of child labour and for all out of school children to attend school. This SCL partner has been playing a leading role in the establishment of Alternative Basic Education (ABE) schools in Adama, Ethiopia to cater for child labour returnees who would have dropped out of school. Education is thus at the core of FSCE's Stop Child Labour movement.

Wabe Children's Aid and Training (WCAT)

In addition to the common approaches of community mobilisation against child labour, WCAT has also introduced the following strategies of eliminating child labour in the CLFZ namely: the provision of toilet facilities; access to reading materials and the equipment for classrooms; the inclusion of children with disabilities; the continuous supervision of the centres.

Improvement of the schooling environment and provision of quality education: Realising the importance of an enabling schooling environment for children, WCAT has incorporated into its programme, the provision of reading/learning materials and the equipment for classrooms with desks and chairs. The floors of the classrooms are cemented and water points installed. Bearing in mind that the unavailability of sanitary facilities has often affected school attendance, particularly for girls, WCAT has ensured that toilet facilities for both boys and girls are established in schools in the CLFZ. Moreover to ensure that children in the ABE centres receive quality education, WCAT has facilitated the continuous supervision of the centres by both WCAT and Woreda Education Supervisors.

Inclusion of children with disabilities: Children with disabilities are often marginalised and excluded from the school system. WCAT is thus pays special attention to children with disabilities. This Stop Child Labour partner has made it possible for disabled children to access education together with their peers in the ABE programme. They have done so by creating an enabling environment for children who are often excluded from schooling since schools do not cater for their needs.

Use of local media as an awareness raising strategy: WCAT

has also taken advantage of the local news magazine to raise awareness on a wider scale on the dangers of child labour and the importance of schooling and the benefits of the CLFZ programme.

OVERALL SUCCESSES OF THE AFRICA CLFZ PROGRAMME AND OPPORTUNITIES

On the whole, the creation of CLFZ has proved to be a viable, effective and sustainable solution to child labour in all the countries where the programme has been implemented. The partners in the four countries have implemented the child labour programme according to the CLFZ model of intervention and in addition have come up with innovative strategies which address the peculiarities and realities of each of the countries and communities in question. The CLFZ programmes introduced in the four countries have been successful in several ways. The following are examples of the major successes of the programme.

Rescue of children from child labour: The most obvious success of the programme has been the rescue of large number of children who were engaged in labour in all the CLFZs in the four countries, with more children who were at risk of entering the world of work being prevented from doing so. There are cases where employers have released children from work (particularly where there has been a strong trade union involvement) and joined school, while some parents within the CLFZ have stopped sending their children to work or significantly reduced their work load at home.

Improved access to education: The strong focus on education by all Stop Child Labour partners has improved access to schooling for a considerable number of children who were out of school, had dropped out, or had a poor attendance record due to their work obligations. Due to the awareness raising efforts of the partners and the school clubs, enrolment rates have risen, school dropout rates have greatly reduced, while the attendance rates have improved in the schools taking part in the programme.

Community awareness and mobilisation: Using various methods of awareness raising, Stop Child Labour partners have to a large extent managed to heighten awareness among community members within the CLFZs about the dangers of child labour and also enabled them to take the lead in the campaign against child labour. This is evident in their active membership and participation in village committees in the CLFZs. The communities have in some cases taken up the responsibility of reporting child labour cases to the police and taken the lead in the infrastructural development of community schools to ensure the provision of quality education. Where the communities are mobilised to be proactive in the protection of their children, it puts them in a position to demand from government, better conditions of learning for their children. This will in turn attract trained teachers who tend to gravitate towards well equipped schools with conditions conducive for teaching and learning.

⁷Iddirs are traditional community based organisations which were traditionally created to provide burial services for community members. Over the years, Iddirs mandate have expanded both in scope and orientation. NGOs and government are beginning to view Iddirs as potential partners in development. Most community members belong to an Iddir and as such Iddirs are powerful organisations in each community.

Child participation: The creation of school clubs has given children themselves the platform to partake in the fight for their own protection against child labour and to air their views about their involvement in child labour. They have done this through drama, songs and storytelling. This has opened up opportunities for dialogue between children and their parents, employers and the community as a whole on how to collectively address child labour. There is also an opportunity for the school clubs to educate their peers in other schools about child labour and about the CLFZ programme.

Stakeholder involvement: Stop Child Labour partners have successfully involved a broad range of stakeholders. These include the children themselves, parents, teachers, employers, trade unions, the media, in some instances – the law makers, local government and traditional leadership. The involvement of trade unions in some CLFZ programmes has seen employers releasing children making way for the employment of adults with better working conditions and remuneration. The involvement of teachers unions has also seen the quality of education being addressed. To some extent, the partners have managed to get the attention of government during their awareness campaigns creating further opportunities for government's increased involvement particularly in the provision of education. The involvement of the media has boosted the awareness of child labour and widened the reach of the principles behind the CLFZ approach. This involvement of various stakeholders ensures a coordinated approach in an area where efforts by various players have previously been fragmented and ineffective.

CHALLENGES

Despite the successes of the CLFZ programme in the four partner countries, there are, however, some challenges which have hindered the progress of Stop Child Labour partners in their endeavours to eliminate child labour in the geographical areas selected. These challenges mainly relate to: the cultural expectations on children to work; the non-alignment of national laws and policies with international law on child labour; the poor implementation and enforcement of the law; poor access to free and compulsory education; the poor quality of education and conditions of learning; food insecurity and the lack of institutional, financial support for the expansion and continued running of the programme.

Cultural expectations on children to work: In all the four countries, African society still generally deems childhood as a time for acquiring the traditional, social and technical skills necessary to perform the future roles of adulthood and hence children continue to work, even to the detriment of their health and education. These expectations on children are deeply entrenched in African culture but experience has shown that these can be overcome by CLFZ, including awareness raising, social mobilization and advocacy.

Non-alignment of national laws and policies with international law on child labour: The four countries have not undertaken comprehensive legal reforms to conform to their

international obligations⁸ for instance: having a harmonised definition of child (Zimbabwe and Ethiopia); having a legal definition of child labour which includes all forms of unacceptable work for children (Zimbabwe, Ethiopia); and the provision of a list of hazardous forms of child labour as required by the ILO Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour (Zimbabwe and Ethiopia). This has in turn thwarted the efforts of Stop Child Labour partners in implementing the CLFZ. It is, however, encouraging that all the countries have legislation setting the minimum age of employment, although Zimbabwe does not link the minimum age of employment with the maximum age of compulsory education. Zimbabwe also does not have a maximum age of compulsory education, while together with Ethiopia, it does not have a law wholly dedicated to trafficking.

Poor implementation of policy and enforcement of the law: There is a general lack of implementation and enforcement of the laws and policies that have been put in place in the four countries relating to minimum ages of employment, worst forms of child labour, compulsory education (only being enforced on enrolment and not on attendance and retention), and on premature and forced marriages.

Poor access to free and compulsory education: While Ghana, Ethiopia and Uganda have a free education policy, it only covers school fees and does not include uniforms, learning materials and lunch. Zimbabwe does not have a free education policy due to the current economic problems. The lack of an all-encompassing free education policy is a direct cause of the high school dropout rates in all the partner countries.

Poor quality of education and conditions of learning: It is clear that the governments of Uganda, Ghana and Ethiopia did not foresee the overcrowding as well as the low teacher - student ratio that would result from the free education policy and hence did not make timely provision for the training of teachers, the building of more schools, more classrooms and water and sanitation facilities to cater for the increased school population. In Zimbabwe, the economic crisis resulted in a mass exodus of teachers to the diaspora while school infrastructure has been left to degenerate to the point of children having to learn in the open. The lack of a conducive learning environment is a disincentive for children to return to school. Moreover, the acute shortage of secondary schools in the Child Labour Free Zones (with the exception of Ghana) means that children graduating from primary schools face the risk of returning to child labour.

Food insecurity: The food insecurity in the four countries due to economic challenges (Zimbabwe), erratic climatic conditions (Ghana) and general poverty (Uganda, Zimbabwe and Ethiopia), famine (resulting from poverty, widespread unemployment, lack of farming inputs) and persistent drought (Ethiopia), are some of the factors that force families to send children to work. The few programmes that provide strategies for food security in the countries have only benefitted a select few due to poor or lack of implementation, corruption, and inadequate resources.

⁷ The four countries have ratified most of these instruments with Uganda taking the lead in the ratification of all the international instruments relevant to the elimination of child labour, followed by Ghana which is yet to ratify the Palermo Protocol on Child Trafficking. Zimbabwe is yet to ratify both the CRC Protocols while Ethiopia is lagging last with the CRC and Palermo Protocols awaiting the country's ratification.

Conclusions and recommendations for the enhancement of CLFZs

It is clear from the above discussion that despite the challenges, the CLFZ programme being implemented in Zimbabwe, Uganda, Ghana and Ethiopia has proved to be a success in the areas of interventions and has the potential to make a difference in the lives of many children, their parents, caregivers and communities as a whole. The programme has indeed provided viable, comprehensive and multi-dimensional solutions, spearheaded by a broad social alliance. It has integrated interventions which would otherwise have been fragmented and have made little impact individually. It has changed attitudes and created a culture for the respect of the rights of children in the targeted communities. The communities have to a significant extent taken ownership of the programme. There are, however, important areas which need to be addressed for the enhancement and expansion of the CLFZ programme. The following are the key recommendations for child labour partners and other key stakeholders in the fight against child labour and they relate to the: provision of quality education and conditions of learning; a focus on secondary schools; provision for bridging schools; clear systems of monitoring enrolment, attendance and retention and performance; focus on food security and the provision of school feeding; involvement of trade and teachers unions in the CLFZ programme; focus on child headed and vulnerable households; provision of psychosocial support for child labour returnees; address cultural expectations on children to work; and the alignment of law and policy with international obligations on child labour.

Provision of quality education and conditions of learning: To successfully extricate children from child labour and return them back into school requires a free and compulsory education policy which also covers the provision of learning materials to curb school drop outs. Hence governments must amend their free education policy accordingly. There is need for an enabling school environment where children receive quality education in appropriate conditions and with adequate numbers of trained teachers. The Stop Child Labour partners, teacher's trade unions, and civil society must lobby both national and local government to make budgetary allocations for school infrastructural development and for the provision of trained teachers. Communities must also be involved in the (re)construction of schools, while the international organisations may provide technical support in improving the conditions for schooling. Teachers' unions also have a big role to play in the development of teacher education and the delivery of good quality teaching. However, we must not

lose sight of the fact that it is the government that has the primary responsibility to ensure the provision of good quality education, by providing the necessary resources and systems for quality control.

Focus on secondary schools: Bearing in mind that many children who engage in child labour are older children of secondary schooling age, there is need for the partners to extend their campaign to lobby governments and others for more integrated policies and practices on these linked issues of child labour and education. More support towards secondary education by the governments as well as by the communities to motivate and prepare the children for a smooth transition from primary schools is required. There is thus a need for the Stop Child Labour partners to lobby government, the local communities and possibly the corporate world for the construction and functioning of more secondary schools.

Establishment of bridging schools: There is need for establishing bridging schools in all CLFZ programmes to reintegrate child labour returnees who would have been out of the schooling system for prolonged periods. It is the responsibility of government through the Ministry of Education to spearhead the creation of such centres while international aid organisations are encouraged to support social mobilization and strengthen local structures to demand for the provision of such institutions. The MV Foundation, FSCE, ADAA, KIN, WCAT and CACLAZ are well placed to technically support such endeavours. Teachers' Unions must partner with government to provide teaching services at such incubation centres. Social workers must be roped in to provide psychosocial support to child labour returnees in these centres. However there is an urgent need for a more systematic approach to the reintegration of children into schools to ensure a smooth transition. The incubation school programme being developed by CACLAZ in Zimbabwe, for instance, is worth replicating in the other partner countries. While the ABE model in Ethiopia has increased access to basic education, more efforts need to be taken to integrate the children into formal schooling in order to improve access to second cycle primary education at Formal Schools. Often the distances to the nearby Formal Schools are too big or the nearest Formal Schools lack sufficient class rooms and teachers to absorb students coming from ABE centers in the area. FSCE, ADAA and WCAT increasingly are working to overcome this challenge, particularly in the new Omar's Dream project started in June 2012.

Clear systems of monitoring enrolment, attendance and retention and performance: To effectively gauge the success of this project, it is necessary for partners to have in place clear systems of monitoring enrolment, attendance and retention and performance of returnees.

Focus on food security and the provision of school feeding: As school feeding is a powerful and effective intervention that can help curb child labour and fight chronic hunger, it is imperative for the coordinated efforts of multiple stakeholders namely, the Stop Child Labour partners (and civil society), schools, PTAs, communities, teachers unions, relevant government agencies (Ministries of finance, agriculture, social welfare, education, health and child welfare), local and international agencies (e.g. WFP and other INGOs), the corporate world and teacher's trade unions to come up with strategies for food security and school feeding.

Involvement of trade and teachers unions in the CLFZ programme: Stop Child Labour actors and interventions are encouraged, where possible, to integrate trade and teachers unions into their CLFZ programmes. Trade unions are in a position to lobby employers not to employ children and play a role in collective bargaining for better wages and conditions of employment for adults and in social mobilisation efforts at the national, regional and international level. Teachers' unions must be actively involved in the development of teacher education and the delivery of good quality of education. Within the ILO tripartite structure, trade unions have the capacity to negotiate with employers and governments for the elimination of child labour. International trade union organizations such as the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), Educational International and national trade union federations like Federatie Nederlandse Vakbeweging (FNV) are well placed to give local trade unions support in setting up programmes in the country for eliminating child labour.

Focus on vulnerable households: The high number of child headed households due to HIV, AIDS and other vulnerabilities in the four countries has hampered efforts to get children back into schools as children are forced to work to take care of younger siblings and sick parents. Government, development partners and international donor/monetary agencies must orient their activities to address the particular needs of orphans; supporting existing family and community-based coping mechanisms in the area of orphan care; mobilising, motivating and sensitising all communities to develop orphan support strategies and interventions. Stop Child Labour partners and civil society must lobby government to make provision for orphans as well as mobilise communities, local and traditional leadership to arrange for the care of such children.

Addressing cultural expectations on children to work: There is need for the Stop Child Labour partners in the four countries to expand their co-operation with schools, civil society, the government and the media in changing cultural expectations on children to work. The motto, 'Child labour is a necessary evil' should be replaced by, 'Child labour, in whatever form, is unacceptable!' This way, everyone is motivated and prepared to work together to get children into school and keep them

there. This can be done by supporting social mobilization and awareness raising campaigns to change attitudes of parents and community members to discourage child labour and support education as the best 'workplace' for children.

Alignment of law and policy with international obligations on child labour and implementation: Governments have an obligation to domesticate and implement international principles they have subscribed to. Stop Child Labour partners, trade unions, and civil society, are well placed to lobby government to harmonise child labour legislation with international law. ILO, UNICEF and UNESCO must continue providing government with the necessary technical support in amending and formulating national laws and policies accordingly. The international treaty bodies (such as ILO Committee of Experts, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child; and the African Union's (AU) African Committee of Experts on the rights of child), may ensure that countries harmonise and implement their national laws with international instruments through their country observations. Like in the European Union, the AU Council of Ministers could ensure the implementation of the treaty bodies' recommendations.

There is a great need for targeted and inter-sectoral efforts by the relevant ministries, for instance those of education and labour in order to ensure integrated policies and practices on the linked issues of child labour and education. Such approaches should be included in the National Plans of Action on children. The role of Traditional and Religious leaders is equally important to abandon child labour and any forms of harmful traditional practices. There is need for trade unions, law enforcement agencies and labour inspectors in the four countries to aggressively implement child labour laws and policies, stamp out all of child labour by prosecuting and punishing offenders. It is necessary that there are collaborative efforts between law enforcement agents across the region to curb trafficking of children. Communities must report cases of child labour, trafficking and child prostitution and harmful traditional practices. UN and AU treaty bodies are also in a good position to monitor implementation of international instruments and constantly remind the countries to implement child labour related policies. It would also be good for these bodies to endorse the CLFZ programme so that it is replicated in countries.

Expansion of the Child Labour Free Zones: In conclusion, given the tangible success of the CLFZ programme, this is a programme worth replicating countrywide, to all countries on the continent and in the world. Armed with facts and figures illustrating the success of the pilot programmes, the Stop Child Labour partners together with other relevant stakeholders, are in a position to lobby government to adopt the programme and implement it at a national level. At a regional level, the Stop Child Labour campaign partners could lobby governments at the African Union level to adopt the campaign while trade unions must use their access to the ILO to encourage the ILO itself and governments to adopt it. The above discussion ultimately proves that the elimination of child labour can only be achieved if all relevant players take a coordinated and integrated approach to child labour, and work on the principle that **'no child should work; every child must be in school'**.