



STOP



Child Labour
school is the best place to work

Annual report for Omar's Dream Project: March 2015

NAME OF THE ORGANISATION	HIVOS, STOP CHILD LABOUR
CONTACT PERSON	AKKY DE KORT AKORT@HIVOS.ORG
CONTACT TEL.; E-MAIL	070-3765500
NAME OF THE PROJECT	OMAR'S DREAM – THE BEGINNING OF THE END OF CHILD LABOUR
PROJECT NUMBER	1004841
PROJECT PERIOD	JUNE 2012 TO OCTOBER 2015
REPORT PERIOD	AUGUST 2014 TO FEBRUARY 2015
PROJECT BUDGET	EURO 3,189,588

1. INTRODUCTION

Hivos was granted with the project, “Omar’s Dream, the beginning of the end of child labour” by the *Nationale Postcode Loterij* in March 2012 for a period of 3 years, from June 2012 to June 2015 with a total amount of Euro 3,189,588. A no-cost extension was approved for 6 extra months, to November 2015.

The project is coordinated and partly implemented by Hivos as part of the Stop Child Labour (SCL) Programme. Stop Child Labour is a coalition of different Dutch, European, African, Asian and Latin American NGOs and Trade Unions. For Omar’s Dream project, Hivos works with 4 other Dutch and several African organizations in the implementation of activities to realize Child Labour Free Zones (CLFZ) in different African countries. These Dutch organizations are:

- *Stichting Kinderpostzegels Nederland* who implements CLFZ in Ethiopia and who prepares 3 West African Francophone countries: Senegal, Mali and Burkina Faso for implementing CLFZ in the future by linking with & learning from other African countries and MV Foundation in India;
- *FNV Mondiaal* in close collaboration with the *Dutch Teachers Union (AOB)* who implements CLFZ in Morocco and Ghana. They also work with Education International through teachers unions in Mali, Senegal, Ghana, Morocco and Uganda on engagement in CLFZ in Africa through linking with and learning from other African initiatives;
- *ICCO Cooperation* who implements CLFZ in Kenya.

Hivos implements the CLFZ directly through the Hivos Regional offices in Nairobi overseeing Uganda and in Harare, Zimbabwe.

So far, nearly 27,000 girls and boys have been prevented or withdrawn from child labour and brought back to, and retained in school as a direct effect from the project interventions. The target of 20,200 girls and boys has been reached and surpassed with at least 7,000 girls and boys. However many more children as well as adults have benefited from the project interventions, for example through the awareness raising, school environment improvement, adult literacy programmes, adult IGAs and savings activities, lobby & advocacy on community, District and National level, among others. The projects in the different countries are working towards sustainable approaches so that the CLFZ can be continued and expanded with less external funding and support. The reality is also that most partners face several challenges that makes it difficult to become fully sustainable. Some of these issues are that governments are not always involved and familiar with the concept so more lobby & advocacy on a National level is important; the issue of migrant families that go from and come to the CLFZ on a temporary basis; crisis situations as droughts, ethnical issues; lack of educational facilities and infrastructure.

PARTNERS AND DIVISION OF BUDGET AND TARGETS

The following table gives a full picture of the African partners, budget and targets.

Country	CLFZ locations	Number of children out of work and (back) to school	Budget (in €)	Observations
Zimbabwe - CACLAZ	1 CLFZ (in Ward 16,) in Chiredzi district (area bordering South Africa)	1,000	364,535	Partner of Hivos. (CACLAZ is a coalition of a NGO/ANPPCAN and two trade unions/PTUZ and GAPWUZ). Main focus on ward 16 as it is a relatively large area for a CLFZ.
Uganda - KIN	2 CLFZ in 2 villages (Kitubulu and Nakiwogo) in Entebbe, Wakiso District	1,600	162,180	NGO partner of Hivos
Uganda - ANPPCAN	2 CLFZ in parishes in Rakai District: Nakatoogo and Mitukula	1,600	126,752	NGO partner of Hivos.
Uganda - UNATU	Wakiso and Rakai District and National coverage	-	80,000	Trade union partner of Hivos. Uganda Teachers Union concentrates on advocacy and policy guidance in adopting CLFZ in Uganda.
Kenya - KAACR	8 CLFZ in 4 Districts: Kisumu, Busia, Machakos, Kwale	4,000	234,592	NGO partner of <i>ICCO Cooperation</i> .
Ghana - GAWU	7 CLFZ Zones in 30 rural communities in three Districts in the Eastern, Ashanti/Kumasi and Volta regions	2,400	302,368	<i>Trade union partner of FNV Mondiaal</i> The initial one CLFZ in Ashanti/Kumasi area is divided in 3 CLFZ due to 3 different areas that are not interlinked. The same for the CLFZ in the Eastern and Volta regions that are also divided in 2 CLFZ each. Total of 7 CLFZ.
Ethiopia - ADAA	8 CLFZ in 7 Kebele's in District Siraro	3,500	116,622	NGO partner of <i>Stichting Kinderpostzegels Nederland</i> .
Ethiopia - WCAT	7 CLFZ in 7 Kebele's in East Estie Woreda, South Gondar	2,100	116,622	NGO partner of <i>Stichting Kinderpostzegels Nederland</i> .
Ethiopia - FSCE	2 CLFZ in 2 Kebele's in Dessie town	3,000	137,906	NGO partner of <i>Stichting Kinderpostzegels Nederland</i> .
Morocco	1 CLFZ in Safi	1,000	197,798	Union partner of <i>FNV Mondiaal and AOb</i> Safi is a big town for a CLFZ and therefore one area within Safi, the industrial area, has been selected as the focus area for the CLFZ.
Total	38 CLFZ	20,200		

LINKING & LEARNING / ADVOCACY & POLICY

West Africa: Burkina Faso, Mali and Senegal	-	-	145,000	NGO partner of <i>Stichting Kinderpostzegels Nederland</i> .
Education International: Morocco, Ghana, Uganda, Senegal and Mali	-	-	98,500	Trade union partner of <i>FNV Mondiaal</i> and <i>AOB</i> .

2. MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND RESULTS

PER COUNTRY:

Zimbabwe

CACLAZ

CACLAZ withdrew and prevented a total of 2,221 girls and boys during the project period. The last reporting period only 71 children were removed from work and brought back to school. The withdrawal of children from work back to school continued, although the rate has significantly slowed down. Indeed, it was to be expected that after a successful awareness raising campaign in which most community members' mind-frames were changed to favor children's education, the majority of the child laborers were sent back to school during the initial phase of the project. Now what we are witnessing are residual cases of those children whose parents took time to understand the value of education.

Most children are now in school and fewer numbers will be recorded of those returning to school in the future. The project has reached 'a plateau stage' in terms of withdrawals. The graph for those returning will now begin to fall sharply down. CACLAZ looks forward to a zero-returnee situation in the next 6 to 12 months as all children return and enroll into school. Of course due to in and out migration of people, the occurrence of natural disasters due to endogenous and exogenous factors, debilitating poverty, droughts and other factors, the achievement of 100% child labour free status will also be hard to realize, but as long as the norm that all children must be in school persists, many children will continue to be sent to school.

CACLAZ also continued to work for the sustenance of the project. An important element of sustaining the project is the handing over of aspects of the project to government departments. Efforts are therefore underway to hand over 'incubation centers' to the Ministry of Primary and Secondary education so that the Schools Psychological Services department takes over the training and monitoring of special teachers at the 'incubation centers'. Parents continue to build better classroom blocks to improve access to quality education. This has become a culture to them. However, lobby and advocacy work continues for government to eventually come in and fulfill their obligation of setting up standard infrastructure in the schools.

During several awareness raising events, CACLAZ used the slogan: Parents to work! Children to school! It helped entrench the idea that children are best when in school and judging from the fast changing attitudes of the ward 16 community members on the benefits of education, our conclusion is that indeed the awareness campaigns are effective.

Community –based structures like the school child protection committees, ward child protection committees,

village heads; school child protection committees received training on children's rights, reporting child abuse protocols, the role of parents in supporting children's education and looking for alternative resources to fund children's education. The organization also talked about the area-based approach leading to the formation of child labour free zones. However, this concept needs a lot more time so that the communities can fully grasp its full meaning.

While CACLAZ did reach out to structures at ward and district levels with education on child labour and the importance of education to all the children, an important part of the project is to educate these same structures on the ABA and the CLFZ concept as applicable to their ward. They need to understand these philosophies and see how they relate to their situation in ward 16.

The same applies to the Provincial and National policy makers. These also need a lot of exposure to the concepts so that they too can appreciate the effectiveness of that in Ward 16. This is lacking at the moment and CACLAZ will have to go out to make sure that that is done. Only then, real meaningful buy-in by the government to this approach can be achieved. There is need to continue bringing more players on board to implement this concept elsewhere in the country and make it popular in the process.

A campaign funded and supported by the Dutch Embassy, UNICEF, ILO and some other Embassies to celebrate Human Rights Day 2014 was held in Zimbabwe in November/December 2014. The CLFZs were promoted and many activities took place in Chiredzi, ward 16 to raise more awareness on the project. The main events were a series of breakfast meetings to sensitize policy makers on the child labour free zones as well as showcase achievements recorded so far, and explore possible areas of cooperation and collaboration; meetings with relevant government ministries to sensitize them on the campaign; competitions among school pupils on issues raising awareness on child labour; a fun run promoting efforts to fight child labour; and a symposium held on Human rights day to celebrate the success of the child labour free zones in Zimbabwe. Indeed, this campaign helped to raise awareness at national level, and alerted senior government departments of the existence of the pilot project in Ward 16 of Chiredzi District. Another important deliverable was the popularization of the CLFZs approach to other organization in Zimbabwe. Since then more organizations are making inquiries to explore ways in which they too can open up child labour free zones in other parts of Zimbabwe.



Uganda

Kids in Need (KIN)

KIN withdrew and prevented 1,700 girls and boys during the project period so far. The target child labour free zones need more resources to delve into the upcoming challenges, especially those that provide learning for emulation in other selected parts of the country. Most of the families in the project area are aware of child labour and have endeavored to send their children to school or for an apprenticeship course. In practically all the areas, there are concrete steps taken towards sustainable approaches. The communities show resilience and the urge to protect the child labour free zone concept; the idea is popularized in the target areas; certain upcoming good practices like the emergence of savings groups and advisory service meetings are picking momentum. The fact that a community can become a resource to itself is a very strong point in the creation of child labour free zones.

More effort continues to be provided through lobby and training of other child protection structures such as child protection organizations where the model gets more support and possibilities. Government bodies such as the ministry of education and sports, ministry of gender, labour and social development and recently the prime Minister's office, have also joined hands in advocating for the child labour free zones in Uganda, especially in schools.

Communities of the target areas are mainstreaming their learning and efforts into the various fields where they are involved. It is worth noting that child labour committees are built of a wide sector of experiences. Those that are in politics are lobbying for their areas using that forum and of recent, some of them started using the media of their own accord to discuss the wellbeing of children in their own communities. The interesting thing is that every community or village has a local radio, which is used to broadcast internal affairs. This forum is well exploited to the success and sustainability of child labour free zones.

Over 30 VSLA groups (884 parents) have been formed and their members well trained to handle their resources thus improving the social economic conditions of poor parents who have stopped engaging their children in child

labour and are fully supporting them with the necessary school requirement to attend formal full time day schools.

The coalition of KIN, UNATU and ANPPCAN held a meeting with parliamentarians who are members of the forum on quality education after oriented on the child labour free zone concept and shared with them the practical experiences that will enable us to create child labour free zones. After their visit to the project areas, KIN maintains ties and dialogue aiming at building opportunities for the upcoming new child labour free zones.

The visit of the parliament to our target child labour free zone areas, the engagement in debate and consequently the broad awareness creation and dissemination of information through the national media houses has had a huge impact on the lobby for the strategy to be adopted as the best practice in the elimination of child labour.

The following gains are worth noting:

- The sustained norm within the communities is 'no child should work'.
- The school is developing as an institution that takes care of all aspects of a child's development.
- Community has taken ownership of the child rights.
- Neighboring communities, especially the Islands will change their norms.
- Institutions are sensitized to reduce the barriers that prevent communities from changing their norm to 'no child should work'.
- All children are heading to school where they can enjoy their right to education in the project area.
- The project area is a resource center for all other areas in the country.

UNATU

Successful Engagement with Policy makers and the subsequent presentation and passing of the Bill on Child Labour Free Zones.

A motion of Parliament to urge Government to create Child Labour Free Zones under Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament of Uganda, was successfully moved and debated extensively and overwhelmingly passed by all the Legislators that were present in the House on 13th November 2014. The Motion was moved by Hon. Rosemary Nansubuga Seninde, Chairperson Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Quality Education and Member of Parliament Wakiso District (Wakiso is one of the Project districts). Hon. Joseph Ssewungu (member of Parliament-Kalungu West) officially seconded the motion.

When the motion was read out, over 70% of the MPs stood up to second it and it was discussed at length with each of the MPs supporting and agreeing child labour was rampant in their constituencies and they said such a motion should have been moved at the time when Universal Primary Education was introduced way back in 1997.

It was resolved by Parliament as follows that:

1. It collectively urges Government to adopt and support an area based approach policy that focuses on rights of all children in an area to be agreed upon.
2. Parliament urges Government to amend legislation with regard to education, employment of children making Universal primary and secondary education compulsory, child employment in whatever form prohibited and providing punitive sanctions for no-compliance for parents, guardians and employers thereby creating Child Labour Free Zones.

Part of this success is attributed to the involvement of the Members of Parliament in some of the activities and the field visits that convinced them that creation of a Child Labour Free Zone is a reality in our Ugandan context.

ANPPCAN

ANPPCAN withdrew and prevented 1,664 girls and boys during the project period so far. With 24 months into the project implementation, the district and the country at large have come to terms with the concept of CLFZ. The designated two CLFZs in Rakai are truly becoming not only a community resource but rather a national resource

that has drawn visitors from other national regions and outside the country to learn from the model. In October 2014, partners from Kenya spent four days in the CLFZ interacting with residents to learn from their experiences. Their visit coincided with another partner's (Uganda Women's Effort to Save Orphans – UWESO) visit to also learn about the secret of success in the Rakai CLFZ. All visitors concluded the visit pledging and promising to establish CLFZ in the areas upon their return home.

On Saturday 11th November 2014, ANPPCAN organized a second Marathon to support CLFZ in Rakai under the theme **"Running to support CLFZ in Rakai district"**. The event attracted 4,000 direct and indirect participants that included the runners and cheering crowd along the 15-kilometer marathon-race-course.

The main objective of this marathon was to create awareness and mobilize all the stakeholders to support universalizing education in Rakai district. This aimed at improving public education. The funds raised (1,257,500 Uganda Shillings = 350 Euros), went into purchasing scholastic materials for the project beneficiaries.

The success of the 23 Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLA) that were established with support of the project has inspired the formation of another 17 groups. Today, Mitukula CLFZ boasts of 14 VSLAs while Nakatoogo has 26 groups. The groups continue rendering saving and loaning services among the members. The 23 groups that are almost two years old now, have completed their second cycle and shared the savings plus the interests. The highest saving recorded at the end of the cycle by one member was 1,173,500 Uganda shillings equivalent to about 286 Euros. Testimonies from the children with such modest saving, members have injected more capital into their small business consequently making more savings to take care of other household needs such as food, clothing and scholastic materials.

Altogether 62 conversations were held with total attendance of 2,694 people (1,705 females and 987 males) actively participated in community dialogues geared at developing the road maps of ensuring that all children of school going age are in school. On average, each community meeting attracted 43 people, a good indicator of the village commitment to children's issues.



Kenya

KAACR

KAACR withdrew and prevented a total of 5,539 girls and boys during the project period so far. As the Omar's Dream project in Kenya nears its final year (3rd year) of implementation, considerable changes have taken place and numerous outcomes achieved in relation to elimination of child labour during the last two and half years.

A key point worth mentioning is that the long awaited Child Labour Policy, which has been a draft for many years, was approved by the Cabinet Secretary of the Ministry of Labour, Social Services and Security in December, 2014 and has been forwarded to parliament for debate. After discussion, the president will sign it giving it a legal mandate for its implementation hence the government will be mandated to fund for its implementation, thereby, creating sustainability of the Child Labour Free Zones (CLFZ) that have been established in the target counties. Kwale Child Labour Committee successfully lobbied the county government through the Member of County Assembly (MCA) build an Early Childhood Development (ECD) school at Kirudi village. The land identified was voluntarily given out by a committee member and the community begun lobbying their leaders including the area Member of County Assembly (MCA) to put up an Early Childhood Development center. The project was fully

funded by Kwale County Government. It was completed and officially opened in January 2015 with two trained Early Childhood Development (ECD) teachers who are employees of county government and 81 (52 boys & 29 girls) of the ages between 4 -9 years. A similar initiative is being replicated in Kibwaga village in Tiwi.

In all the four counties, tremendous achievements were noted. In total in the 4 sub counties, (8 villages), 5,539 children were withdrawn and prevented from child labour and (re) integrated in schools. In Kisumu, Obwolo and Obunga village only reported to have withdrawn and prevented about 2,925 children from labour and re-integrated them to various levels of education. The communities were economically empowered and established more than 29 Village savings and Loaning groups comprising of a minimum of 15 members. These groups have seen more than 20 parents starting income generating activities (IGAs) to support their children in school.



Ethiopia

ADAA

ADAA prevented an extra 885 girls and boys this reporting period and a total of 4,273 girls and boys have been (re) integrated in school. Pro-poor families (300 women) were supported with vegetable seeds to plant and produce at their homestead. As a result, the income of these women has improved which in turn helped them in providing balanced diet for their children. Currently, children from these families are better accessing vegetables and other balanced diet that in turn helped them to properly attend school.

In view of improving skill and knowledge of community facilitators different capacity and skill improvement trainings have been conducted. Accordingly, 6 days refresher training has been given for community facilitators on different titles like procedures and principles of community conversation, ethics of community facilitators, approach and responsibilities of community facilitators. A total of 14 facilitators (4 female and 10 male) participated in this training. This training improved the skill and knowledge of community facilitators in the area of facilitating the community conversation sessions and which resulted in increasing the awareness of parents on the benefit of education of their children. This finally resulted in enrolment of large numbers of school age children.

Construction of new learning rooms

In view of accommodating preschool children, a total of six (2 per school) learning rooms have been constructed in three project schools.

Currently, because of the introduction of preprimary class (O level) programme in these schools, large numbers of children at the early age (5-6) are getting an opportunity to learn and enjoy their right to education from their early age schools.

There is a strong collaboration among focal line offices, Community leaders, implementing partner, facilitators, volunteers, PTAs, and CWACs over the last three project implementation years. These stakeholders have worked together towards realizing group's vision, mission, and creating structure of child wellbeing forum. In view of empowering economic capacity of mothers with low economic background; seed money has been distributed to self-help groups that positively contributed in changing the economic capacity of these mothers. On the other hand; strong collaboration and networking has been built to gain and share experience on creating child labour free zones among ADAA, FSCE and WCAT which will largely help to sustain the existing lessons and practices across the country.

FSCE

FSCE managed to prevent and withdraw 3,384 girls and boys from child labour and (re)integrated them in schools. They conducted several capacity building, active learning and quality education sessions for teachers. This resulted in a much better understanding and pro-active follow up by teachers that reduced drastically the dropout rates.

The Multi - Stakeholder Community Based Child Protection Structures (MSCCPS) have been able to protect a total of more than 65 children in the two kebeles from child labour. The MSCCPS have provided educational materials to children; brought children from the street (where they are exposed to exploitative and abusive environment) and reunify them with their families. From this total figure, 17 children are those who are trafficked and brought to kebele 01 of Dessie city from the country side. The MSCCPS of 01 kebele (this kebele is found at the outskirts of the city where a huge number of trafficked children are found from the countryside) is now sending the children to their

countryside homes so that they can pursue their education being with their parents/guardians.

As a result of the community conversation (CC) sessions that have been scaled up in the last reporting period, a better understanding of the concept of child labour and other child abuses among the community has been observed than it had been in the last two years of the project. It is now possible to say that a protective environment is created in the target kebeles where the CC sessions are being undertaking. The following are a few among the results:

- Target community has attracted neighbors, friends & relatives to attend the CC sessions when these groups of people bring children from the countryside to let them engage in laborious activities (using providing access to education as a pretext).
- Target community, which previously was abusing its children unconsciously, has now become alert and protect its own children from engaging in exploitative activities.
- Target community is now raising awareness and reporting (when awareness raising does not work) to the locally established MSCCPS about the case. So, it is responding.
- Local target community is extending the awareness to the neighboring kebeles about the negative impacts of child labour and other child abuses
- In the targets kebeles, no child under 18 is employed as a housemaid.

Child labour has now become an agenda in the community to fight against.

WCAT

WCAT managed to prevent (1,447) and withdraw (3,550), a total of 4,997 girls and boys from child labour and (re)integrated them in schools. 3,409 (1,382 women) adults have been attending Integrated Functional Adult Literacy (IFAL) programme in the 8 targeted schools. The IFAL is the programme designed to influence the parents and youth in the community about their livelihood improvements in general and education of their children in particular. So, in this case, it includes youth, women and men above the age of 18 years old.

One of the reasons for children to dropout from schools was mainly because of economic problems. To overcome and minimize this problem, different provisions and services have been undertaken for children from parents of very low economic status relatively with high level of vulnerability. The kinds of the provisions were educational materials, school uniforms and different sanitary and hygienic materials. As a result, 660 (324 female) identified vulnerable children in the 8 schools were retained in schools and attend education similar to their peers.

In order to improve the livelihood conditions through measures taken step by step and strengthening the economic status of the poor parents, provision of startup capital for 102 (80 females) disadvantaged women and youth have been done so that they are actively engaged in Income Generating Activities (IGA).

The amount of startup capital given was 1000-1085 birr per IGA beneficiary. With this money, they started rearing sheep. The main purpose of the provision was to empower parents economically and enable them fulfill educational expenses of their children to continue their education without any drop out. But before the provision, practical training on how to rear sheep was provided for them by the trainers from Estie woreda agriculture rural development office who have expertise in animal husbandry.

Discussion on how to access quality education was conducted at kebele level with the school community in the 8 schools with 160 (63 females) participants including schoolteachers, parent's teachers associations (PTA), students, teacher associations, child development promoter forum (CDPF), kebele education and training board (KETB) and youth clubs.

The objective of the discussion was mainly focusing on the enrollment and participation of out of schoolchildren, the essence of quality education and the community contribution on the access of quality education. The discussions helped participants understand quality education and how to improve access to quality. They decided to contribute to the community resources for the construction of additional classrooms and other necessary inputs and hence more people in the community assisted the schools to mobilize local resources from the community willingly.

The woreda education office (local government) collaborated with us for the proper implementation of our project activities and achievement of the objectives by continuous supervision and mobilizing the community and other stakeholders. It also gives us an office and electric service without any rent.

Not only the woreda education office but also all our signatories collaborate with us by providing transport service to transport different materials from the woreda to the schools. We have been invited and participated in all the consultative meetings and discussions regarding education issues organized by the woreda education office to discuss issues on child labour. So, through networking and collaboration, the issue of child labour is owned by different actors at the woreda level.

Major results achieved so far are:

- 3,072 children (1,458 girls) in primary education and 478 (232 girls) children in "O"-level class total 3,550 children (1,690 girls) have been withdrawn from work and integrated into school since the start of the campaign.
- 4,997 (2,482 girls) children have been accessed to education and indirectly benefited from the stop child labour campaign.
- Dropout rates and out of school children decreased in the target areas.
- The awareness level of the community on importance of education especially girls' education and inclusive education improved.
- The attitude of the community on children with disability (CWD) improved and 56 CWD enrolled in school in an inclusive approach and have access to education.
- Harmful traditional practices such as early marriage decreased and participation of female children increased.
- Teachers' performance on how to teach, lesson planning and how to measure and evaluate their students improved. As a result, repetition rate decreased.
- 242 (132 girls) children have been transferred to higher-grade levels completing from primary schools.



Ghana

GAWU

GAWU managed to prevent (1,284) and withdraw (1,481), a total of 2,765 girls and boys from child labour and (re)integrated them in schools. Community systems and structures have been put in place to ensure sustainability of the project. The Anti-child labour clubs have been established in all schools and community chiefs continue to participate by implementing monitoring and self-policing systems.

Bridge schools are running in all centres. These are non-residential in most cases and are supporting less privileged and newly withdrawn children to have class placement in conformity to their ages.

The project has developed three CLFZ models namely the Torkor Fishing Model, the Cocoa (Agriculture) and the Oil Palm (Cooperate Social Responsibility) Models. These models can be used, adopted and domesticated by new organisations, NGOs and unions willing to use the CLFZ approach to address child labour and create systems to prevent and sustain gains made.

Ghana currently has 72 child labour free zone communities in the cocoa, oil palm and fishing communities, thirty (30) of which are direct products of the Omar's Dream project and forty-two, a pilot under the ILO in cocoa communities. The Ghana Government with its national steering

committee on child labour is reviewing the National Plan of Action on child labour to reflect the concept of CLFZs. The GAWU coordinator is a key resource person to the process.

A Member of Parliament (MP) in Ghana (Hon. Joseph Amenowode) is supporting the efforts of GAWU through policy advocacy and campaign in Ghana's parliament. He has become an icon and a lead (MP) campaigner and is championing the cause of the concept of child labour free zones thus, increasing the visibility of child labour concerns amongst parliamentarians in Ghana. He works with both opposition and other minority MPs. He has requested CLFZ materials for all 275 members of parliamentarians in Ghana. He has also championed the establishment of a West African Parliamentarian Against Child Labour (WAPACL).



Morocco

SNE

In total 1,345 girls and boys have been prevented and withdrawn from child labour. This reporting period an extra 45 working children have been withdrawn from work and put back into school, in non-formal education classes in three different schools in the new selected industrial area within Safi. The non-formal classes have three different levels. It depends on the last class the child left school and went to work.

The methodology and the strategy used in this project enabled the union to prevent school dropout from the targeted schools and to reintegrate working children in schools. The focus has been on 12 schools in different neighborhoods in Safi. No school dropout has been registered during this period. Great efforts have been done to retain boys and girls who are at risk of leaving school before the age of 15 years. This is through raising awareness about the child labour phenomenon within a large population of the community.

SNE conducted another research in Safi with the aim to select an area where many children work so that they can focus on a specific smaller area within Safi to work on the CLFZ approach. The industrial area was being selected where many boys are working. The study did not give a good overview on working girls, as those are more hidden forms of child labour. SNE envisaged that by starting in the area with the boys, the girls will also be attracted and reached out to, to get them also back to school. From the 45 withdrawn children, already 12 girls are part of it.

The national advocacy focused on pushing the Government to deepen their commitment and react positively. Indeed, because of this the governor 'Walli' of the region, the representative of the Ministry of Education and the representative of the Ministry of Labour at the regional and local level are ready to collaborate and become stakeholders in the project. This was clearly

illustrated during the field visit of the Regional EI Delegation.

More education staff are engaged in the union activities: conferences and training sessions, have been organized for teachers, headmasters, education personnel, parents, local NGOs, regional and local authorities, employers, members of parliament. Teachers received comprehensive training of 6 modules of two days to strengthen their capacity skills in: children rights, child labour in Morocco and in Safi, pedagogical sessions of extra classes to fight against school dropout, advocacy and lobbying.

Shortsighted students are diagnosed and provided with glasses. Classrooms for disabled children have been equipped and so disabled children are attending school.

For more information: www.clsne.org

Or

<http://195.140.240.101/default.aspx?id=237&article=51284>

Or

<http://www.fnv.nl/over-fnv/internationaal/mondiaal-fnv/wereld-van-mondiaal-fnv/kinderarbeid/safi/>

LINKING & LEARNING

West (francophone) Africa

Six NGOs in Mali, Burkina Faso and Senegal through *Stichting Kinderpostzegels Nederland* are preparing themselves to implement CLFZ by learning from MV Foundation in India, Ethiopian and Ugandan partner agencies and via workshops and conferences from many other partners in different African countries.

Representatives of all 3 countries participated in the kick-off meeting of a new project: Out of Work that is also being coordinated by Hivos and implemented by the partner organisations of the different Stop Child Labour Coalition partners. The meeting gave room to the Omar's Dream partners to share their experiences and learn from other and new partners and the Mali CLFZ experiences. There was also a session where the Omar's Dream partners could share their actions and ideas on sustainability approaches that gave 'food for thought' to work on, towards ending their projects by half/end 2015.

In January 2015, a support visit took place by an Ethiopian CLFZ resource agency, ADAA to the new Stop Child Labour partners in Mali, Burkina Faso and Senegal.

Ethiopian organizations have started piloting the implementation of creating child labour free zone through education in the year 2012 just by contextualizing the best experiences drawn from MVF of India as per the reality of Ethiopian context. Similarly, West African Partner Organizations have also paid similar visit to India in 2012 and to Ethiopia in the year 2013 to share experience on how the Ethiopian Organizations have adopted MVF experience to Ethiopian context and at the same time to learn from the process they have been through in implementation of creating child labour free villages through education.

The observations made and recommendations given to the West African partners were:

- Still a number of children are out of school due to distance to school; ignorance of the parents that school is the best place to work; the fact that children's work is part of the upbringing and learning process even when they don't go to school; poor school environment and schools not child friendly;
- Lack of adult literacy programmes, while many adults are illiterate;
- Schools not suitable and prepared for disabled children;
- Not a clear understanding between bridge and non-formal classes and formal classes;
- Special attention and support required for the community overwhelmed with deep-rooted traditional practices.

While observations were also made that, the Mali partners pay good attention to:

- Using existing resources and structures;
- Engagement of the community to set up the processes that lead to CLFZ;
- Bringing women on board and attention for girls to get back to school;

- Breaking the silence and introduction of formal schooling in the areas where the community predominantly overwhelmed by Koranic schools;
- Working with local government and government at the national level.

Education International

Education International through *FNV Mondiaal* finalized the activities in the 6 initial countries and developed a new plan to continue with 3 countries: Uganda, Mali and Morocco. The connections help empower the union child labour coordinators who implement both projects in Mali and Uganda. Efforts have focused on sensitising teachers, education workers, parents and communities about the new Child Labour Free Zones in Mali and Uganda. In Morocco, activities focus on making the CLFZ in Safi sustainable.

In February, the education unions of Mali and Uganda drafted a resolution on child labour in the context of the post 2015 Sustainable Development Goals to be presented to the EI World Congress (July 2015).

Community outreach continued according to the unions' strategies. Some focused on media strategy (printed media, radio and television) like Morocco and Uganda, others focused on internal union communication (Mali and Uganda).

Mali: workshops have been organized by the SNEC in December to train teacher focal points in the regions selected for the new project "Out of work and into school". Local radios have broadcasted live these trainings.

Generally, connections have also been made with the EI-Novib project on Quality Education, which aims to define, with SNEC Mali, the competences primary teachers should have to ensure quality teaching and learning. These include content and pedagogical knowledge, life skills and awareness about gender justice and gender sensitive learning, the right to education, the importance of mother tongue education, and health and nutrition.

Uganda: the extended period of the Omar Dream project focused on supporting the development of the Child Labour Free Zone in West Nile, which is the zone identified by the new Out of Work and into School project.

Several district level meetings have been arranged to mainstream the eradication of child labour in the union policy. A large UNATU district meeting for 70 education union representatives took place in March in the West Nile district of Nebbi.

In the first period of the programme, UNATU mostly concentrated on raising awareness about the project within the community through the development of publicity materials. Meetings have been organised with community leaders to develop appropriate messaging and ensure the translation in local language. Radio spot messages were also prepared to be released on FM stations in West Nile around the Global Action Week and later to mark the annual World day against Child Labour, which this year focuses on education "No to child labour-Yes to Quality Education".

Morocco: In January, the teacher union SNE hosted a field visit to showcase the Child Labour Free Zones of Safi. This activity was being financed and facilitated by the Dutch Teachers Union, AOb and it has many connections since observers came from the education unions of Ghana, Mali, Senegal, Uganda and Zimbabwe among others.

The planned study visit to the MV Foundation in the state of Telangana, India, scheduled 21-27 February had to be cancelled at the last minute due to visa concerns. The field visit will be organised before the Omar's Dream project ends to give at least the teachers unions a boost to learn from the source.

Lobby, Advocacy and Networking: The education in the three countries devote a lot of effort to the networking. Within the Out of Work project in Mali (with Enda and AlphaLog) and with CEFORD and KIN in Uganda.

The education unions in Mali and Uganda have also developed a fruitful working relationship with their national ILO-IPEC representatives. A new project is about to be signed in the two countries for activities around 12 June 2015, the World Day Against Child Labour.

The field visit in Safi showed the good connections built around the Safi CLFZ by the education union SNE with local and national authorities, education authorities, parents and community associations. Relations with the media was also optimal with a good coverage of the field visit in local and national media.

The adoption of a Parliamentary Motion in Uganda is a major breakthrough in terms of advocacy.

AWARENESS RAISING & INTERNATIONAL POLICY ADVOCACY

The Handbook on Child Labour Free Zones has been drafted through a participatory process of involving the partners to get their stories and feedback on the text. The handbook is being designed, translated and printed so that it is ready to be launched during the end-term meeting in May in Uganda and extra attention to be given to it during 12th June, the world day against child labour.

The handbook is meant for the Omar's Dream stakeholders - especially partner organisations and field staff. Furthermore, the handbook is for other stakeholders around the world working on the realisation of CLFZ. It will serve as a source of inspiration and practical guide for these target groups to learn more about the application of the area based approach towards the creation of CLFZ in different contexts.

Stop Child Labour received a grant of EUR 5 million from the **Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs** for a new programme that runs from May 2014 to April 2017. The programme strengthens and expands CLFZ worldwide were possible with active involvement from CSR initiatives and companies. It is being implemented in 6 countries and in different sectors: Uganda-coffee; Zimbabwe-tea; Mali-gold and agriculture commodities; Turkey-hazelnuts; Nicaragua-natural stone; India-natural stone, leather and shoes, garments. The overlapping countries with Omar's Dream are Uganda, Zimbabwe and Mali.

In October 2014, a kick-off meeting took place of this new project in Ségou, Mali. All partners from the different countries came together, including one partner from each Omar's Dream country. This helped the new partners to learn from the Omar's Dream partners and from the field experiences in Mali. Mali took advantage of the meeting in their country and invited the Ministers of Labour and

Education and some Local influential people to make them part of the meeting and the area based and CLFZ approached. They used it as a lobby and advocacy exercise to get more buy-in from the Local Authorities as well as from the National level.

The end-term meeting of Omar's Dream being planned for May will have the same objective for Uganda, to strengthen their efforts as Stop Child Labour Coalition to lobby and advocate for a wider acceptance and usage of the area based and CLFZ approaches.

An **external evaluation** of the Omar's Dream countries and India has started from January 2015 being financed by Hivos and partly by *Stichting Kinderpostzegels Nederland*. The evaluation should serve to inform and assist in the improvement of future engagements. The objective of the evaluation is to describe and document the CLFZ approach and critically study it, or rather its applications, to find out whether they work (or not) and how and why they work, and whether their results are sustainable. The first preliminary findings of the evaluation will be shared with all the partner countries during the end-term meeting in Uganda in May 2015. The final evaluation report is being expected by 12th June 2015.

3. CASE STUDIES

Find below case studies that describe interventions at the local level to give an impression of the projects.

CACLZAZ - Zimbabwe

Running child labour out of Chiredzi District

In November 2014, a unique event to spread awareness on child labour took place in Chiredzi town. Chiredzi town lies in the Southern part of Zimbabwe, some 200 kilometers from the border with South Africa, and 140 kilometers from the border with Mozambique. It is home to about 560,000 people, most of whom depend on farming for their livelihood. Quite a number are into sugarcane growing which is quite labour-intensive. At times some resort to the use of child labourers on their sugarcane plots to cut down on labour costs. Others depend on child labour at their family plots. Therefore, this town has its own fair share of child labour.

On the 7th of November 2014, about 200 athletes converged at the now discussed public swimming pool to register their names for a fun-run that was taking place to raise awareness on child labour.

The athletes were divided into two categories: The Youths-aged groups 18 to 40 and the elderly- 41 and above. These criteria applied to both males and females. It was billed 'a fun-run' because it brought a lot of fun to the participants, but amid this fun was a lot of education to both the participants and the onlookers.

The race started at 9.00 in the morning with over 200 participants taking part. All the participants were given T-Shirts to wear, and these shirts had the important message 'Stop child labour' engraved on them. There were more male participants than female with the ration standing at 120 males to 80 females. The senior category had even less females of ages 40 and above. These numbered about 10. The senior male category had slightly more representation with 24 elders taking part.

The fun-run brought together the private sector, government departments and NGOs to rally their support behind the cause for the elimination of child labour. Some companies operating in Chiredzi town supplied free water canisters to the athletes and also made billboards with solidarity messages against child labour. One such company is Baobab water. The other is the Lowveld Sugarcane growers' association with over 300 farmers as members. The fun run therefore became a litmus test for future cooperation with the private sector in matters to do with the elimination of child labour. The Larger Company, Tongaat Hullet, also sent representatives to say solidarity messages to the participants at the fun run. A good lesson learnt in this regard is that if mobilization is effectively done, many stakeholders will support initiatives to combat child labour.

During speeches made by different stakeholders after the run, all the speakers seemed to agree that child labour is a scourge which must be removed from our midst, and that the best place for children to be is school. There was a convergence of ideas on the need to free children from the vice. So the second lesson emerging from the fun-run is that all people, if educated about it, want children to be out of work and go to school. Another important lesson learnt during the fun run is that people learn best through play, or through fun. The fun run sent very clear messages to the entire community of around 560,000 in Chiredzi town that child labour must be banished from our midst. The community leaders who took part in the event requested CACLZAZ to organize another fun run in the future.



UNATU – Uganda

Successful Engagement with Policy makers and the subsequent presentation and passing of the Bill on CLFZ

A motion of Parliament to urge Government to Create Child Labour Free Zones under Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament of Uganda was successfully moved and debated extensively and overwhelmingly passed by all the Legislators that were present in the House on 13th November 2014. The Motion was moved by Hon. Rosemary Nansubuga Seninde; Chairperson Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Quality Education and Member of Parliament Wakiso District (Wakiso is one of the Project districts). The motion was officially seconded by Hon. Joseph Ssewungu (member of Parliament- Kalungu West).

When the motion was read out, over 70% of the MPs stood up to second it and it was discussed at length with each of the MPs supporting and agreeing child labour was rampant in their constituencies and they said such a motion should have been moved at the time when Universal Primary Education was introduced way back in 1997.

It was resolved by Parliament as follows that:

1. It collectively urges Government to adopt and support an area based approach policy that focuses on rights of all children in an area to be agreed upon.
2. Parliament urges Government to amend legislation with regard to education, employment of children making Universal primary and secondary education compulsory, child employment in whatever form prohibited and providing punitive sanctions for non-compliance for parents, guardians and employers thereby creating Child Labour Free Zones.

Success factors

Identification of a strategic and committed Child Labour Champion

The Choice of Hon. Seninde Rosemary as our Champion was a perfect choice in terms of her current portfolio as a Member of Parliament, Commissioner of the Parliamentary Commission, Chairperson of the Parliamentary Forum for quality education, who is highly respected by both the ruling and opposition Members of Parliament. Hon. Seninde is also a former teacher, a very good mobilizer and has very good working relationship with the current Speaker of Parliament and is very passionate about child rights issues.

Involvement and commitment of all UNATU Top leadership

The National Chairperson, Margaret Rwabushaija, the General Secretary- Tweheyo James, The Vice National Chairperson Gonza Ssensamba and other members of the National Executive Council and senior staff have been supportive in taking this intervention forward. They personally participated in the engagements with MPs and others activities.

There is transparency in the planned activities and we share out roles. This has created ownership of this programme. Any of the above can ably articulate issues around CLFZ.

Involvement and commitment of all the Coalition Partners & other key actors

UNATU has been working with all the National Coalition Partners – KIN and ANPPCAN and the line government Ministries of Gender, Labour & Social Development, Ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Education and civil society. This has benefitted us in terms of sharing technical expertise and having a bigger voice as we engage in advocacy.

Evidence based advocacy

We have been using statistics and some qualitative information obtained to present to the concerned as a way of generating their support. We mention national statistics (2 million children in child labour) and move on to mention the statistics pertaining to a particular area, for instance school completion rates, children in child labour say on regional basis. This has been very instrumental in mobilization because people get to appreciate the magnitude of the problem and the consequences.

Field Visits by Members of Parliament and other key actors

The exposure visit to the KIN-CLFZ to enable the legislators have the physical feel of what establishment of a child labour free zones entails. Members of Parliament were able to interact with the executive of the Child Protection Committee from Kigungu village. The Chairperson, Vice Chairperson explained how the whole process started, the identification of children not in school and documenting the process, awareness raising on child labour and the importance of education, the economic empowerment programmes in the area and other sustainability programmes within the community and the existing by-laws such as those with children not in school not to benefit from the VSLA (Village Savings and Loans Association).

During the presentation of the motion, the Members of Parliament who were part of the field visit, made powerful contribution supporting them with evidence from the field. Therefore, for one to have a successful advocacy, you need to be supported by evidence that something can work.

Technical Support- drafting motion

We involved draftspersons from Parliament who developed a draft that was up to the expected standards.

Awareness raising, promotional materials and media publicity plus correct timing

Both print and electronic publicity have been crucial in our advocacy process. We have been using a multichannel approach, meetings, print, radio, talk shows. We identify the most suitable channel for each target audience and the timing is also very important. For members of Parliament, breakfast meetings are most preferred. Our orientation meetings started from the national level and then to lower levels.

If there is likely a seemingly bigger event, then you halt yours so that it gets the media attention it deserves, for instance if there is a reshuffle of cabinet Ministers, then you may be lost in the bigger event, so you publish your article either earlier or after.

Timely reporting, feedback and team work

These very high-level advocacy engagements need continuous feedback and great teamwork to be able to succeed. We had to work closely and updating each other to jointly decide and own certain decisions.

Credibility & Visibility of the Union

Our engagements with Government on several issues ranging from teachers welfare to children's issues has helped us in increasing the Union visibility and relevance, such that when we present some item, most of the stakeholders take us seriously and are always ready to work with us. Moving forward, we need to mobilize resources to engage the relevant Members of Parliament to support moving a Private members Bill. We have written a concept and shared with some partners, Action Aid International but we are yet to get a response.



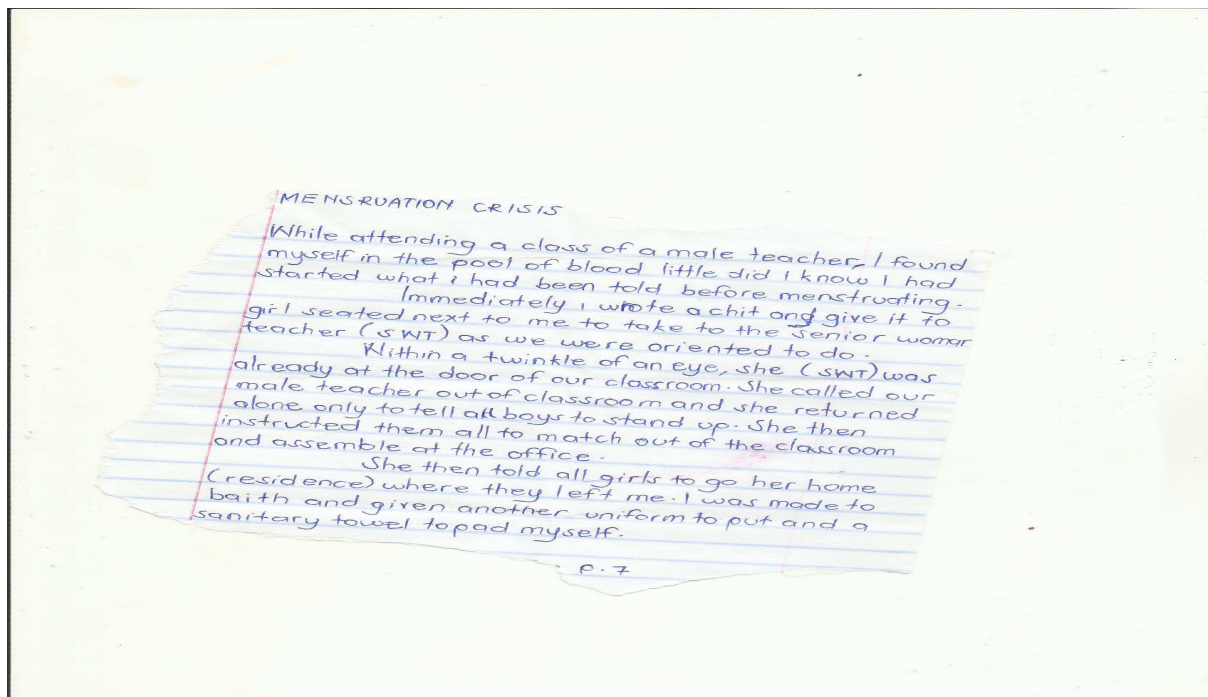
Members of Parliament, UNATU, KIN Representatives after interaction with the executive of Kigungu Child Protection Committee



Members of Parliament inspecting the poultry project for Mukama Afayo VSLA group

ANPPCAN – Uganda

One of the key activities for making Omar's Dream come true in our CLFZ, child protection policies were developed in schools to check on levels of violation of children's rights in school. It was envisaged that teachers were taking advantage of child protection policy gaps to violate children's rights in guise of disciplining and teaching them. One policy that has been widely adopted by all 56 schools in the CLFZ, is the one for school administration keeping two sets of uniforms and sanitary towels at school for girl children that unexpectedly find themselves menstruating while at school. The testimony of Nakivumbi Catherine (not her name) summarizes it all.



GAWU - Ghana

General Agricultural Workers' Union (GAWU) of Trades Union Congress Ghana

The chairman of the community child labour committee who also doubles as the organizer for the GAWU fishing community in Kpando, a lead CLFZ campaigner and an actor (Bro. Louis Acolatse) was voted the best fisherman for the 2014 season in the whole of Volta Region at the National Farmers' Day award celebration. One of the criteria for his award is ensuring through our programme the promotion of child labour free zones in fishing communities. This is a great achievement and a boost for our efforts.



KAACR – Kenya

Kirudi

“During the inception period of the Omar's dream project in Kirudi Village- Tiwi location in Kwale County, many children were not going to school as they were engaged in quarrying activities and sand harvesting. Kirudi was badly affected as children as young as 6 years were already introduced in quarrying activities (breaking stones for ballast).

The Community members and parents explained the reason for children of school going age not accessing full time formal schooling due to some economic constraints and location of the nearest school being many kilometers away from the village. They felt that they could not allow their children to trek for long to school because of their age as well as protection issues especially on the girl child. After a number of trainings and sensitizations campaigns against child labour and implementation of the Omar's Dream project activities in Kirudi village, the community became empowered and aware of effects of child labour and the importance of the community carried out an asset mapping exercise and identified the need of building an Early Childhood Development center within the village. The land identified was voluntarily given out by a committee member and the community begun lobbying their leaders including the area Member of County Assembly to put up an Early Childhood Development center. The project was fully funded by Kwale County Government. It is now complete and has two trained Early Childhood Development teachers who are employees of the county government and 81 (52 boys & 29 girls) children of the ages between 4 -9 years are in the centre.

The children are happy to be in school and hope to achieve their dreams and the local child labour committee continues to mobilize the community and other stakeholders to ensure more children are withdrawn from child labour and are re-integrated in school. The community is happy and proud of themselves for the change they influence in the community through the project of “Omar's Dream, beginning of the end of child labour in Kenya”.

ADAA – Ethiopia

CWAC and FFC Liberated Children from Labour

Gemedo Banda, 13 is a child living with a disability from Jarti Bakule Kebele, where he lives with his parents. Due to a physical disability coupled with low awareness of parents, he did not so far attend school. Through the collaborative effort made by CWAC and facilitators for change of this village, he has got an opportunity to attend school in the nearby school, Jarti Bakule primary school.



FSCE - Ethiopia

Ayalew is an 18 year old boy who had been leading a very desperate life together with his family. His mother with a mental problem staying at home and a father employed as a guard earning a very small amount of monthly salary. With this income, they were not able to fulfill the basic needs of their three children leave alone sending them to school. Largely, the responsibility of supporting the family lies on Ayalew as an elder boy in the family. He was working with a tailor who sews clothes of various types with a minimal daily payment of ETB 10.00 at his village, which actually is lesser than a dollar. When FSCE Dessie Area Programme Office commenced its second project year on creating child labour free zone in kebele 01 and 03, (kebele 03 is where Ayalew is from), of Dessie town, he was one of the 15 elder children selected from his locality. After taking technical and vocational trainings related to his previous work and receiving a startup capital of 5,000.00 ETB, he made it to buy a sewing machine of his own by adding some amount of money from his own saving. Ayalew, who had been always wise enough, has now become able to send his two younger siblings to school and protect them from labour and other abuses. Moreover, he has now saved more than 20,000.00 ETB in his bank account. "I would have been able to save more than this, had I not been supporting my parents as well", says Ayalew. He is also hoping a brighter future ahead. Remark (Name changed to keep anonymity).

WCAT - Ethiopia

Tamirie was born in 2004 in Ethiopia, Amhara National Regional State, South Gondar Administrative Zone, Estie Woreda at Shimaglie-Giorgis kebele. She has 2 brothers and 2 sisters and she is the last child in her family. Her family had been engaged in farming economic activities. Unfortunately, her parents are divorced now and her mother leads a very poor life. Even though her mother wanted to send Tamirie to school, she was not able to fulfill educational materials and a uniform for her. The mother engaged in daily labour. As a result, Tamirie engaged in domestic and agricultural work to help her mother instead of attending school and she lost 2 years of time not to enroll in school.

When WCAT identified and collected data of vulnerable and out of schoolchildren, many children were found engaged in child labour activities. Tamirie was one of them and she got a chance to join with the members of the Child Development Promoter Forum (CDPF). The CDPF forwarded and discussed the socio economic problems of Tamirie and her family to WCAT and the school management, Estie project.

Consequently, WCAT provided educational materials and a school uniform for her. Then, Tamirie enrolled in school in grade 1 for the first time at Mehalgie primary school. Now, she is grade 2 student and attending the school regularly. Additionally, WCAT provided startup capital for her mother in order to engage her in income generates activities (IGA). So, her mother is now engaged in income generates activities for rearing sheep in 2013/14. Hence, Tamirie and her mother would like to thank the school committee, WCAT project and the community for their efforts to bring children to school.



SNE - Morocco:

From work to school in Safi

In the Moroccan coastal city of Safi, education union SNE is working to eradicate child labour. This poses quite a challenge, which is why SNE is engaging teachers, parents, municipal authorities and employers to help out. However, they are succeeding. The first 40 children who had left school to go to work have now returned to the school. Salma and Zakaria are two of them.

Many pupils who drop out of school in the Moroccan coastal city of Safi go to work in potteries, the phosphate industry or in car garages. In the garage district, teachers are taking to the streets to get children back into school, which is not an easy task. *'Garage owners hide the children when they see us coming.'*

At the front door, Najat looks at her guests apologetically: she has no bread with olive oil or msemen – small Moroccan pancakes – in the house. It is customary in Morocco to receive guests with an abundance of treats, but Najat does not have money for them. She apologises several times, also for the simple, small one-bedroom house with a small kitchen and a toilet behind a curtain in a poor area in Safi where she lives with her husband Youssef, her son Brahim (6) and her daughter Salma (12).

Najat works in a sardine factory on an on-call basis. Her employer did not phone today. Luckily, her husband who works in the phosphate industry did get a call and left for the factory at dawn. Najat now has plenty of time to help Salma pack her school bag and to brush and put up her daughter's hair.

Today, Salma returns to primary school, the Zarktouni school in the south of Safi. She had to leave that school two years ago because her parents wanted her to stay home to look after her younger brother and because they wanted her to work as a maid to ensure that the family had sufficient income. Every day, the twelve-year-old cried her way to work where she had to clean, do the dishes and look after small children after which she returned home dead tired in the evening. Because she felt guilty and was ashamed, Najat kept her daughter at home after a few months, but she did not return to school. Until today.

Washing car tires

At the access gate to the Zarktouni school, teacher Meryem Doublal (30) awaits her pupils, children between the ages of 12 and 15, who were absent from school for several months or even years, some of whom worked as a car mechanic, a salesperson for plastic bags or a maid. Doublal checks her watch nervously. The 12 children on her list should already have been there, but only 4 pupils are on time.

Apart from Salma, Zakaria Rajati (14) is one of them. He quit school 18 months ago because he had to repeat a class, twice, and no longer wanted to go to school. His mother, Zahra Nayti, who accompanied him on his first school day felt 'awful' when her son quit school and was worried that he would hang around on the streets aimlessly, but Zakaria found a job in the garage district of Safi where he earned 50 dirhams (€4.50) for a six-day working week. The fourteen-year-old had enough of it quickly: *'Washing car tires the whole time was no fun.'* Zakaria wanted to return to school, but the step to returning had become too big after 18 months, until Meryem Doublal talked to Zakaria at the garage where he worked and asked whether he wanted to finish primary school. Now Zakaria is sitting on a bench outside the classroom with his mother – waiting for his new classmates.

Second chance

Today at three schools in Safi 40 pupils who used to work in Safi's garage district had their first day at school. In the past few months, Doublal and five other teachers 'recruited' these children by walking around in the area and talking to minors and their employers. According to Doublal, the children are bursting to return to school. *'They now know that school is better than working and are very happy with their second chance.'* Overall, parents do not present a problem either, but employers are more difficult to convince. The teacher explains: *'Some of them deny that a working child is a minor or hide the children when we come down the street.'* Other garage owners, who often started working at a young age themselves, are more easily convinced by the teachers' arguments and see that the boys are better off going to school.

Girls who work as maids are found by talking to shopkeepers. Doublal: *'In Morocco, shopkeepers know everything that goes on in a neighbourhood, including where girls keep house. We then ring the doorbells at those houses or wait to talk to the girl when she goes home.'*

The parents of children who return to school do not have to pay for the lessons or school materials. That is taken care of by education union SNE and the municipal authorities. The union pays the salaries of the teachers who are used for the special 'bridging classes' set up where the children are taught at their own levels until they are ready to join regular primary school or can continue to secondary school or vocational education.

One hour later than scheduled, the bridging class at the Zarktouni school starts with 11 pupils. Doublal looks relieved: *'I was afraid that many children would return to work, but the turnout is good, thankfully.'* The teacher looks around the classroom, the children look at her uncomfortably. *'What do you want to be later?'* Doublal asks. Zakaria wants to be a car mechanic and Salma wants to be a teacher. *'I enjoy talking to children and helping them to learn.'*