

# **EDUCATION TO COMBAT ABUSIVE CHILD LABOR**

## **Planning Educational Response Strategies for Working Children in Honduras**

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## ACRONYMS

<b>AMBLI</b>	Misquito Honduran Association of Hurt Divers
<b>BAYAN</b>	Asociación de Desarrollo Socio-Económico Indígena
<b>BEPS</b>	Basic Education and Policy Support Activity
<b>CADERH</b>	Centro Asesor para el Desarrollo de los Recursos Humanos de Honduras
<b>COHEP</b>	Consejo Hondureño de la Empresa Privada
<b>CONADEH</b>	National Commission for Human Rights
<b>CRC</b>	Convention for the Rights of the Child
<b>ECACL</b>	Education to Combat Abusive Chile Labor
<b>EDUCATODOS</b>	Education for All, A Honduran nontraditional basic education Project
<b>FUNPADEM</b>	Fundación para la Paz y Democracia
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>IBE</b>	Intercultural Bilingual Education Program
<b>IDB</b>	InterAmerican Development Bank
<b>ILO</b>	International Labor Organization
<b>INAM:</b>	Instituto Nacional de la Mujer
<b>INFOP</b>	Instituto Nacional de Fomento Profesional
<b>INE</b>	Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas
<b>IPEC</b>	International Program for the Elimination of Child Labor
<b>ITVEM</b>	Instituto Técnico Vocacional y Educación Moral
<b>MOE</b>	Ministry of Education
<b>MOH</b>	Ministry of Health
<b>MOL</b>	Ministry of Labor
<b>MOPAWI</b>	Mosquitia Pawiza Apiska
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organizations
<b>SAT</b>	Sistema de Aprendizaje Tutorial
<b>TIP</b>	Trafficking in Persons
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children Fund
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development



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## I. SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this document is to use all of the available information to assess the viability of planning a pilot intervention to provide educational opportunities to working children in Honduras, especially those involved in abusive forms of child labor. A desk study of information about child labor in Honduras was the basis of the early input. Using the input of that study, ECACL planned and executed two assessments in specific regions of Honduras: one in the southern cone of Choluteca and Valle, the second in the Mosquitia. The findings of those two studies are discussed in this document.

Outstanding issues relating to an education intervention are discussed. Those issues include the positions of the Ministries of Labor and Education, the potential role of the private sector, the opinions of parents and children, the work done by NGOs and donors, and finally an analysis of possible educational interventions might be appropriate to use in such a unique situation.

The paper takes the reader through the decision-making process that results in ECACL choosing the department of Valle, in the southern cone, for the site of the proposed pilot activity. Potential interventions for the pilot to test are discussed, as are possible indicators and a possible regional conference on child labor.

### **Objective**

The objective of this activity is to plan an effective and efficient pilot project that addresses the issue of education to combat child labor in Central America.

The key elements of the activity are:

- The task order;
- The desk review of child labor studies from Central America;
- The rapid assessment in Honduras;
- The pilot project.

### **Activities**

#### ***Task Order***

The Education to Combat Abusive Child Labor (ECACL) activity is a Task Order under the Basic Education and Policy Support (BEPS) Activity, a multi-year, worldwide, indefinite quantity contract sponsored by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Center for Human Capacity Development (HCD). The BEPS activity, administered by Creative Associates International, Inc., is designed to be responsive to USAID's overall goal of "human capacity built through education and training" by supporting improved and expanded

basic education, especially for girls, women, and other under-served populations. CARE International is a sub-contractor to the BEPS activity.

ECACL focuses on building the capacity of USAID to respond effectively to the problem of abusive child labor through basic education policies and programs. One deliverable under the task order is the planning and implementation of pilot projects in the four USAID geographic regions. This assessment and related activities is a direct response to that requirement, and focuses on Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC).

Through discussions with BEPS and USAID, it was determined to focus this pilot project on Central American countries with a USAID presence, instead of all of Latin America and the Caribbean. That narrowed the candidate countries down to four: Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua. The following desk review was conducted to further specify the target for the pilot project.

***Desk Review***

During the first trimester of 2002, ECACL conducted a desk review of child labor issues in the four candidate countries. All potential sources of recent studies were investigated. A total of 56 studies were acquired. Only one of the studies was more than two years old. The studies fell into these categories:

<b>Country</b>	<b>Number</b>
Nicaragua	13
Honduras	5
El Salvador	16
Guatemala	15
Regional	7

While most of the country studies were work-specific, the Nicaraguan studies were geography-specific, discussing all of the child labor problems found in a given geographical region or municipality.

Many of the studies were sponsored by ILO/IPEC. Four of the studies were sponsored by USAID/Guatemala’s regional economic development project. Through that project USAID contracted FUNPADEM, a Costa Rican NGO, to conduct child labor studies in all of the Central American republics. A few of the studies were conducted by other NGOs and international agencies such as UNICEF.

El Salvador was eliminated as a potential candidate for the pilot project because the desk review revealed that El Salvador had the most available data, and it had been designated an IPEC pilot project country. It will therefore receive a great deal of attention from other sources.



From the review of the studies, it appeared that of all the Central American republics, Honduras had collected the least data, and therefore could possibly benefit the most from ECACL's efforts. Also, the Mission in Honduras and the Labor Attaché expressed enthusiasm for the project. Moreover, the desk review revealed that there are several abusive forms of child labor in Honduras. Two especially caught the attention of reviewers. They are:

- Working as agricultural laborers in the fields of Valle and Choluteca.  
In Honduras, as in other countries, some 70% of child labor takes the form of agricultural work. In the southern cone of Honduras, the departments of Valle and Choluteca, there are dozens of plantations where green chilies, melons, watermelons and okra are sown, harvested and processed for export. The agricultural work with melons is most abusive because of the proximity of workers to the noxious chemicals used to eliminate pests.
- Working as lobster fishermen in the area popularly known as La Mosquitia.  
Early estimates from the desk review indicate some 9,000 to 16,000 child divers are working in the northeast of Honduras, in a remote region known as the Mosquitia. Reports were that divers were frequently paralyzed from the "bends" and/or became impotent, and that the Misquito culture did not promote the value of school attendance.

Therefore, based on the desk review and the subsequent encouragement from USAID/LAC, it was decided that it was appropriate to do a rapid assessment in Honduras in two areas, child melon workers and child lobster divers.

### ***Rapid Assessment***

The purpose of the rapid assessment is to determine which of the two forms of child labor, melon farming or lobster diving, would be the most appropriate area for ECACL to focus its pilot project. Issues to be taken into consideration in the rapid assessment are:

- Which area is more abusive?
- Which area, considering our resources, is the most viable in which to make an impact?
- What are the main problems of child workers of the selected area?
- Who are the potential partners?
- What would be appropriate interventions from the child labor aspect?
- What educational interventions are available?

The findings and recommendations of the assessment will be used to guide the design of a pilot project to be carried out under the auspices of the USAID EGAT/ED, the BEPS activity and ECACL.

This rapid assessment, combined with the preceding desk review, will provide recommendations for project design. The final document will be shared with the US Embassy and the USAID Mission in Honduras. A translated version will be provided, via electronic mail, to the Honduran government and those individuals and institutions that both participated in the study and requested a copy of the results.

The assessment will provide programming information for the USAID Mission in Honduras, USAID's Latin American/Caribbean and Global Bureaus, and the Government of Honduras. The education of girl workers will receive special attention in the pilot project phase.

### ***Rapid Assessment Methodology***

This assessment addresses the relationship between child labor and the supply and demand of education to working children in two specific areas of rural Honduras, the southern cone around Choluteca, and the northeast area known as the Mosquitia<sup>1</sup>. The entire itinerary of activities in both research sites can be seen in Appendix B. This study provides an overview of child labor and educational issues in Honduras, and then focuses on the two areas determined to be the most problematical:

- The south of Honduras, specifically the Departments of Choluteca and Valle, is the center for numerous agro-industries that contract child labor, especially for melon harvesting and processing. Other industries employing children include salt processing, conch fishing, sugar cane farming and shrimp farming and processing.
- The north coast of Honduras, specifically the Departments of Colon, Atlántida and Gracias a Dios, is the center for the \$29 million per year lobster diving industry.

### ***Research Strategies***

This assessment is a rapid assessment, since it was conducted using strategies that are typical of that genre of research. It also is participative research, since it attempts to reflect all of its findings, several times during the activity, to the publics involved in the study. The purpose of participative research is to acquire a much deeper level of understanding of social processes, and at the same time validate the data acquired.

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<sup>1</sup> "The Mosquitia" is a term used to describe where the indigenous Misquitos live. The Mosquitia includes parts of the departments of Colon and Atlántida, and the entire department of Gracias a Dios. It also includes the area occupied by the Misquito people on the Nicaraguan side of the border.



The principal mechanisms for data acquisition were:

- Desk review of previous research;
- Focus groups;
- Key informant interviews;
- Observations;
- Group discussions;
- Records review;
- Public feedback meetings.

The planning for focus groups began before going to Honduras. The sampling of the groups was done with the support of in-country institutions. Parents of working children and the children themselves were recruited. The children ranged from 8 to 17 years of age, were mostly boys, and represented a variety of forms of work, including salt processing, melon and chili production, domestic duties, fishing, and lobster fishermen on the north coast.

Key informant interviews were a key data gathering strategy. Approximately 160 interviews were held with embassy officials, USAID officials, mayors, a state governor, over 20 private sector executives and foremen, government officials, children, field and factory workers, other youth-at-risk workers, Chambers of Commerce, UNICEF and IPEC officials, NGO workers, school officials and promoters of vocational and alternative educational strategies.

Original plans included the use of a questionnaire methodology. The purpose of the questionnaire was to find out how policemen see their role in the enforcement of child labor laws. However, it was learned that it is the prosecutors for the Ministry of Labor (Office of the Public Defender for Children) who are charged with the administration of child labor law, and it is administered on an informal basis, i.e., officials were not able cite any formal proceeding in which an individual had been prosecuted for child labor abuses, *per se*. Therefore, interviews with officials of the Ministry of Labor and Public Ministry were substituted for questionnaires.

Field observations were an important part of the methodology. None of the field observations were announced in advance. The team conducted observations at every possible level of child labor on the melon farms (field work and processing), the shrimp industries (although it was low season for shrimping) and salt farms (at the salt flats and packaging plants). The sugar cane harvest had just finished and therefore there was little to be seen.

On the north coast the assessment was conducted during the four-month ban on fishing. Therefore, children and youth involved in the industry were available for interviews, however no actual observation of the work could be conducted.

There were three cases of using a group discussion mechanism. This strategy was used when the researchers were given the opportunity to participate in a statewide meeting of coordinators for the EDUCATODOS project in Choluteca. It was also used with a group of businessmen at the Consejo Hondureño de la Empresa Privada (COHEP) office in Tegucigalpa and at two meetings of interested persons, organized by the Chamber of Commerce of Choluteca.

Records review was a strategy used in several ways. First, previous studies were scrutinized. Second, school enrollment, graduation rates and dropout rates were secured from school officials. Third, the child labor module of the Household Survey for Multiple Purposes was reviewed for general demographic information, and education and child labor statistics. Finally, there is a census of lobster divers maintained by the Honduran Merchant Marine. This census and partial hospital records of injured divers were studied.

The final activity— participative reality testing of the data—served the dual purposes of validating the accumulated data and giving stakeholders the opportunity to make additional inputs. Preliminary plans included putting notices in the newspaper to announce these meeting, however it was concluded that it would be imprudent to open the forum that wide. A general forum for the preliminary presentation of findings in agriculture was conducted in Tegucigalpa with 22 persons in attendance. There were eleven persons present a month later when a similar meeting with persons interested in the lobster diving industry was held. Previous to that, partial findings were shared at meetings in the geographical areas of interest, the southern cone and the northeastern coast.

The researchers arranged “entry” and “exit” interviews with the US Embassy and USAID Mission in Honduras. The output of those meetings was taken into consideration in the final report.

### ***Pilot Project Planning***

Instead of a recommendations section to this report, a section of critical issues to be taken into consideration in the planning of the pilot project is presented. This section will build on what was learned through the desk review and rapid assessments. It will also take into consideration such factors as the identified problems of working children, the selection of a single pilot, the assessment of potential partners, and desired results.

### **Pilot Project**

The resulting pilot project will have the following general characteristics:

- It will be designed jointly with the implementing NGO;
- It will be overseen by ECACL;
- It will be implemented by an NGO in Honduras;
- Part of its launch will include a regional child labor conference;



- The length of the pilot project will be approximately one year;
- The results will be evaluated against pre-agreed indicators at mid-term and at full-term.

The nature of the study is geography-specific. That means that it will study all of the forms of child labor in specified geographic areas. This implies that the subsequent pilot project will be geography-specific also. In this case, the two identified geographic areas are the southern cone, almost completely dedicated to agriculture, and the northeastern coast, almost completely dedicated to lobster fishing.

Specifics of the planned pilot project can be found in Section VIII Providing Education to Child Workers in the Southern Cone.



## II. BACKGROUND

### Honduras

#### *Political History*

Honduras and all of the other Central American republics gained their independence from Spain at the same time in 1821. The individual republics remain pretty much as they did when they existed under the Spanish as “*capitancias*”, or military/political entities. Through the years they have all experienced numerous military dictatorships. Presently all of the Central American Countries have democratically elected presidents.

The population of Honduras is estimated at 6.3 million inhabitants, with 51% under 18 years of age (IHNFA, 2001). It is bounded on the north by the Caribbean Sea and on the south by the Pacific Ocean. Nicaragua is to the south and El Salvador and Guatemala to the west. Hondurans are predominantly mestizo (mixed indigenous and European descent), with only 1.5% of the population pertaining to purely ethnic groups (BID, undated). Among those ethnic groups are the Lencas (descendants of the Inca, mostly in the west), Garífunas (descendants of African slaves, along the north coast) and Misquitos (indigenous origins, found around the eastern border of Nicaragua and Honduras).

Honduras’ population includes English speakers on the Bay Islands off the north Coast. These people are descendants of pirates and are resentful of Tegucigalpa’s insistence that school be taught in Spanish.

The population around the western border with Guatemala is predominantly of Mayan descent. In the mountains that divide Honduras and Guatemala there are still families that speak Mayan dialects.

In the northeast of the country there is a sizable (around 70,000) population of indigenous Misquitos. These people still speak their own language, which once again creates problems in the schools. The Misquito population stretches into Nicaragua, and they see themselves as Misquitos first and Hondurans and Nicaraguans second.

The last notable minority in the country is the Garífunas. The Garífunas originally came from Africa on slave ships, but were deposited on Caribbean islands temporarily. Somehow through the years they migrated to the Caribbean coast, stretching from Belize to Panama. They also have their own language.

#### *Economy*

Honduras is considered to be one of the poorest countries in the hemisphere, with an annual per capita GDP of \$870, compared to the Latin American average of \$6,728. Most of the population works in the informal sector and is therefore under salaried. Poverty, for over half of the

population is an all-consuming issue. About 16% of the children aged 5 to 13 have to work at least part-time to contribute to the family income (Secretaría del Despacho de la Presidencia 2001). Wages are lower in the rural areas, where minimum salary is slightly less than \$4 per day. The Ministry of Labor reported that children less than 15 years of age are only entitled to \$2.75 per day in rural occupations, but that may somehow be related to the idea that they are only allowed to work four hours per day, even though they actually work more than eight hours per day.

Unemployment, estimated at 3.7%, is not high. The problem lies in under-employment, which is estimated at 22% (World Bank 2000). The explanations for sub-standard work opportunities are believed to be related to the poor quality of public basic education, and the fact that access to education is sparse in the rural zones, especially for post-primary education (PREAL 2001).

### ***Society***

Many of those who live in rural areas migrate to the urban areas of San Pedro Sula or Tegucigalpa (PREAL and FERMA 2002). Although 53% of the population still lives in rural areas, about 16% of the population resides in metropolitan Tegucigalpa and another 8% in San Pedro Sula (Secretaría del Despacho de la Presidencia 2001). Urban migration has brought with it all of the typical problems associated with overpopulation and overloaded public services. For instance, although locals drink water from the tap, it is not considered potable by international standards. In addition, only 20% of the rural homes include adequate sanitation facilities. These and other weaknesses are reflected in an infant mortality rate of 42 per 1,000 live births (AMHON, undated).

Also, urban migration has caused problems with youth gangs and delinquency in general. Almost every day there are newspaper articles<sup>2</sup> with cases of child and family abuse, street children, kidnapping, children being exploited for sex and pornography, and trafficking of children.

Honduras is trying to cope with the phenomena of an unusually large population of street children. In 1998, the government estimated the number of street children to be around 8,000, mostly in Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula. Of these only half have shelter on any given day; the others live permanently on the streets. Street children also work as street vendors, although exact numbers are not available (US Department of State 1999).

The issue of street children is mentioned here because street children are frequently child laborers. Nevertheless, the topic of street children will receive little attention in this document because street children are predominantly urban phenomena. This document addresses the educational needs of rural children.

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<sup>2</sup> One researcher observed articles every day in the local newspapers over a two-week period, discussing all of these problems except for child labor.



### ***Education***

Only 43% of Honduran children between 4 and 6 years of age have access to preschool opportunities, and an even smaller percentage take advantage of those opportunities. Statistics of school matriculation for children ages 7 to 13 varies between 83% and 93%, depending on the study, but that is just the percent that registers for school, not the percent that attends school. Average education level is 5.3 years nation-wide, but only 3.3 years in the rural areas. In rural areas, at times, entire classes dropout of school for a month or more during the harvest season, and some never return to school. Even those who return are a problem. School absenteeism caused by the absenteeism for work creates serious catch-up problems when and if the child decides to return to school. That, in turn, creates problems for the children who did not miss school to work. Either they must sit through reviews for those who did work, or those who did work will find it almost impossible to catch up. Neither solution is optimal.

### **Geographic Focus**

For reasons to be discussed later in this paper, there are two geographic foci for this rapid assessment. They are:

- The southern agricultural cone, including the Departments of Valle and Choluteca, and,
- The northeastern coast, including the area known as The Mosquitia, but especially the department of Gracias a Dios.

### ***Departments of Valle and Choluteca***

The rural departments of Choluteca, population 365,000, and Valle, population 141,600 (Secretaría del Despacho de la Presidencia 2001) are in the southern region of Honduras. The sections of Choluteca and Valle that straddle the Pan American Highway are broad plains that lend themselves to farming.

Most of the available work is agricultural, and many of the workers, especially in melon production are women and girls. Locals like to comment that the work is more appropriate to women and girls since they do not have to bend over as far as men to work with the melons.

The climate is very dry, with temperatures frequently rising above 105 degrees during April, May, June and July. In addition, this area of Honduras frequently suffers from drought.

In addition to traditional agriculture, proximity to the ocean provides labor opportunities in shrimp farming and salt processing. Residents of the area are eager to be employed due to the overwhelming poverty. Outside of the farming (sugar cane, melons, watermelon, chilies and okra) and the salt and shrimp industries there are few other sources of employment.

The city of Choluteca (population 45,000) is the major town in the Department of Choluteca. It is the largest city in the south of Honduras, and is just 10 miles from the border with Nicaragua. The major town in the Department of Valle is San Lorenzo. It is Honduras' main port on the Pacific Coast.

### ***Gracias a Dios***

Most Hondurans refer to the department of Gracias a Dios as La Mosquitia instead of by its formal name. The Mosquitia, however, is the larger geographical area occupied by the Misquitos. Gracias a Dios is also commonly referred to as the 18<sup>th</sup> department, implying it is the last on the 18 departments. The main reason for this is the physical isolation and remoteness of Gracias a Dios. Access to this part of Honduras from the rest of the country is either a week-long trek, a two to three day boat ride along the coast or down the River Patuca from Olancho, or a relatively expensive flight from La Ceiba or Tegucigalpa

The territory of Gracias a Dios is the second largest in Honduras. The total population is estimated between 56,000 and 90,000. Eighty percent of this population is Misquito. Other ethnic groups include the Tawahkas, Pech, and Garífunas. A small percentage of the population is matzo. The highest elevation in Gracias a Dios is five meters above sea level. Most of Gracias a Dios is flat, and wet. The rainfall is torrential, at 160 inches per year.

It is said that the Honduran government did not become active in this department until the 1970's. There has been a concern that the Misquito population was affiliated more closely with the Misquitos in Nicaragua than with Honduras. The government insisted on school being taught in Spanish, even though there were not enough Spanish-speaking teachers in the area. The law requires that class instruction must be taught in Spanish even though the first language for most students is Misquito, and it is difficult for them to understand Spanish.

In recent years, the government has financed improvements in health services. Sixty to 70 percent of the villages have health centers. However, of the 110 villages in the department, only four have access to electricity (produced by generators). There are very few employment or income generating opportunities. Most of the population depends on subsistence farming for food, especially rice and beans. Fishing is a source of nutrition along the coast and rivers.

The small farmers complain that it is illegal for them to harvest and sell wood from the hardwood forests. However, locals claim that it is common knowledge that wealthy individuals, including political officials, are exploiting the hardwood of the Mosquitia for export.

### **National and International Child Labor Conventions and Policies**

#### ***International Conventions***

Honduras ratified ILO Convention 105 on August 4, 1958. ILO Convention 105, which describes forced labor, is important to this study because incidents of child labor that fit the ILO description of forced labor have been reported in Honduras. The US Customs Department has the responsibility of banning imports to the US that are produced with forced labor. Therefore, US Customs inspectors have visited the south of Honduras where this study was conducted, to evaluate the conditions that surround labor, especially issues related to forced labor. To date the US Customs has not found the conditions to be "forced," however the US Labor Attaché of the American Embassy continues to monitor the situation.



ILO convention 138 was ratified in Honduras on June 9, 1980. ILO Convention 138 defines the age under which children should not work. Honduran law recognizes any individual under the age of 18 to be a minor, and is therefore protected by law.

ILO Convention 182 was ratified in Honduras in May, 1981. ILO Convention 182 addresses the worst forms of child labor. It is important to this study because there have been reports of the worst forms of child labor in Honduras. Some of those reports have been documented.

The Convention for the Rights of the Child (CRC) was promulgated by the UN in 1989. On May 31, 1990 Honduras ratified the CRC. The CRC is important to this study because the provision of basic education is one of the rights guaranteed to children. If child labor deprives a child of the right to a basic education, then child labor either needs to be eliminated, or some compromise whereby basic education can be provided to working children needs to be implemented.

### *National Policies*

The Honduran Constitution addresses both the issues of basic education and child labor. Chapter IV discusses the rights of children to work on only a limited basis before the age of majority, and assures that under all circumstances access to basic education will be provided.

Chapter V of the Constitution assures that the government will behave in accordance with international conventions, such as the Convention for the Rights of the Child, and ILO Conventions 38 and 105.

Furthermore, numerous legal codes protect children in the workplace, assure work standards and provide for basic education. In the case of children who are too poor to afford basic education, the State is obligated to assist them. Other statutes provide protection for children against sexual abuse in the workplace. Children are also protected against economic exploitation.

Labor law provided for the payment of a \$46 annual education allowance to full-time employees who have children and are employed in places of business with more than ten workers.

In short, the State is legally obliged to provide a free basic education, and to make secondary education progressively more accessible. Finally, the State is obliged to assist those who are too poor to take advantage of educational opportunities, and protect them, especially children, against exploitation in the workplace.



### III. THE SITUATION OF CHILD LABORERS IN HONDURAS

#### Why Children Work

##### *General*

The reasons why children work in Honduras can be categorized into three categories: poverty, cultural and education.

According to the statistics presented in a national diagnostic (National Commission for the Gradual Elimination of Child Labor 2001), 70% of child labor in Honduras between ages 10-17 years is male. However, it is probable that these statistics do not take into consideration a phenomenon referred to as invisible employment, which, among other things, represents the work performed by girls and women in their homes. In agriculture, the majority of the child labor force is thought to be male, however with the evolution of the agro-industries, more girls are visible working in the fields and packaging plants (melon, chili peppers, shrimp and salt) than before.

The national minimum wage in Honduras is approximately \$4 per day. This is an issue that is raised frequently in the south because under-age employees oftentimes are either not paid by the companies or paid less than the stipulated amount that adults are paid. Of all the youth interviewed in the south, none were earning the minimum wage. Most stated that they were earning \$3 to \$3.50 per day, although foremen indicated it was more. There were complaints that payments were sometimes deferred to future dates, leaving the youngest employees in a powerless and helpless situation. Some even complained that the first two weeks and the last two weeks of employment went uncompensated. Those who complain quickly earn a reputation as troublemakers, running the risk of losing their job and being blacklisted by other companies.

The issue of salaries is complicated by several factors. It is not uncommon for youth to falsify their age by using documents of older friends or relatives. The companies are aware of this, and since the youth will have no recourse it is said that some companies take advantage by not paying the minimum salary. On frequent occasions, especially in situations where adults are hired not on the basis of a daily wage but on the basis of units of output, adults bring family members to assist and finish the work at a faster pace. The relatives are ignored by the companies, but their presence in the workforce has not gone unnoticed by local and international labor officials. This practice creates another form of invisible labor, since the presence of family members on the job is not captured statistically.

Some companies display limited interest in placing controls on their labor force. This depends primarily on the attitude of the owners and senior managers of the business. During the past few years, as a direct result of globalization, there has been more pressure from foreign governments, especially the U.S. through the Department of Labor and customs officials, for stricter controls of labor issues, especially as concerns child labor. This pressure has been felt locally, and has

been reinforced by Honduran authorities. There is a growing number of export companies that have come to recognize that their exports to the U.S. may be jeopardized if they hire child workers. There are also managers who refuse to hire under age youth for fear of the consequences of national laws.

Fortunately, there are also companies that have adopted strategies to support local human development through education and training. These companies seem sincerely committed to improving local standards, partly on the basis that it is in their long-term best interest to have a larger pool of educated persons as prospective employees. These companies are concerned about their image locally, nationally, and internationally, and have opened their plants to inspectors from the International Labor Office and the Honduran Ministry of Labor in exchange for being certified as companies that do not employ children.

In Choluteca and Valle, policies that prohibit child labor have an especially harsh impact on the families of working youth. Subsistence farming in the typically hot and dry conditions of the south barely provides for the basic needs of the rural poor. These families depend on the income of their children to subsist. When their children are refused work, the impact on their family can be dire.

It is difficult for families that live in poverty to plan on a long-term basis. The long-term impact and benefit of a basic education for their children is not a priority for the parents. They prefer to count on a meager but daily contribution to their economy than invest in the education of their children, which could bring the family greater benefits and security in the long run.

### ***Poverty***

Poverty in Honduras is something of a mystery. Honduras has mineral resources, including gold and silver. It has coasts on both the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea. It is not over populated, and its health system has improved markedly in the last decade, except for the damage caused by hurricane Mitch. Nevertheless, there are at least three clear causes of poverty in Honduras.

One cause of poverty is natural disasters. Honduras has suffered from two hurricanes (Fifi and Mitch), two earthquakes and numerous floods in the last 20 years. Each disaster sets the country back 10 to fifteen years in development. The most recent of those disasters was the catastrophe provoked by hurricane Mitch in 1998. Just to give the reader an idea of the damage caused by one of these disasters, Mitch is used as an example. It is estimated that there were 7,000 deaths, 11,000 persons disappeared, and two million, out of a total population of roughly six million, were negatively impacted by Hurricane Mitch. More than 50,000 homes were either destroyed or severely damaged. Add to that the fact that 2,500 out of a total of 10,000 classrooms in public schools were damaged or destroyed. The central offices of the Ministry of Education in Tegucigalpa, including records and equipment, disappeared in the floods (Castellanos 1999). As a result of Mitch, 100,000 elementary school children, for one reason or another, would no longer attend school (World Bank 2001). Many workers were displaced, as the temporary migrant worker camp at the left displays.



Another cause of poverty is the education system. The Education Report Card (PREAL, 2002) rated the quality of education as poor and not improving, in spite of national and international programs. There were some improvements in coverage, but that too is nebulous since measurements of coverage typically reflect basic education. In fact, the coverage for grades seven through 12 in the rural zone is estimated at only 27%.

Finally, poverty in Honduras has been exacerbated by a lack of leadership at the national level. Fifteen years ago there was a series of changes of government led by generals of the army. Since that time there have been three democratically elected presidents, but somehow progress has been slow to reach the vulnerable populations, such as women, rural residents and children.

### ***Culture***

Rural families strongly embrace the concept of child labor, and at the same time reject the importance of their children acquiring a basic education. In focus groups with 24 parents of working children, the parents argued that the income from the children helped to put food on the table and provided a modest cushion for medical emergencies. They also argued that when children worked they stayed out of trouble and acquired a good work ethic. At the end of one session, a father stood up and asked formally: “What do we get if we send the children to school?”



The adult focus group also broached issues related to family planning. Four of the women in the group had given birth to 10 children; one woman had given birth to 15 children. There seemed to be a sense of parents strengthening their own social security by having more children. If one had more children, even if some did not survive to adulthood or moved away, it was likely that some of them would be available to care for the parents when the parents were too old to work. The idea of parents assuring that their children were

prepared to live their own lives seemed somehow reversed, the prevalent idea being that children were needed to assure the wellbeing of the parents’ lives. The more children, the more family workers there would be.

In one focus group of 29 children, the children shared opinions that were similar to those of the parents. When they were asked which they preferred –“going to school or working”, they literally jumped out of their seats in enthusiasm to say “work”. Most of the children in the group, aged eight to 17, had received some basic education (21), but one girl had never attended school.

In the other region, in the Mosquitia, women play an important role in the Misquito culture. In fact, Misquito society is described as matriarchal. Polygamy is not sanctioned by law, but is commonly accepted and widely practiced. Girls begin to have their own families when they are teenagers. In the Misquito language, there is no term for a single adult: the terminology goes from teenager to parent. Because men move from one family to another, the women inevitably assume the leadership role in the home. Custom forces them to be independent and self-sufficient. Sexual relations are not reserved for monogamous relationships. Sexual promiscuity is the norm within the Misquito culture. Men and women have casual sexual relations with multiple partners. Consequently, even teenaged girls need to work to support their own families.

There is a relationship between past religious beliefs and issues of responsibility that are too complex to be analyzed in this assessment. The Misquitos had a naturalist vision of religion, with gods and spirits represented by the wind, storms, hurricanes and rainbows. There is a resulting cultural tendency to accept the things that happened as fate. The implication is that there is a general reluctance to assume responsibility, and blame whatever happens on destiny. These cultural and religious beliefs impact the attitudes of the child workers as they prepare for their deep sea diving missions and in other aspects of their lives. For instance, fatalism results in ignoring safeguards against HIV/AIDS. Doctors regard this issue as a time bomb waiting to explode.

Coupled with this fatalistic attitude is the introduction of drugs into the Mosquitia during the past two decades, and the increased availability of marijuana, cocaine and crack in most communities in Gracias a Dios. The divers are notorious for consuming drugs prior to diving for lobster and conch.

### ***Schooling***

The following three reasons summarize why it is that Honduran children from the rural areas do not see education as a viable alternative to work.

*Access:* There are not as many middle or secondary schools as there are elementary schools (PREAL 2002). Transportation is necessary for most of the children who attend secondary schools, and transportation is expensive by local standards.

*Cost:* There are numerous expenses associated with school attendance (PREAL 2002). For instance, when children attend school, lost income is felt by the whole family. Also, there are uniform, school materials and transportation expenses.

*Relevance:* Most parents from the rural zones feel that learning beyond reading and basic math is not relevant to the lives of the children or family (PREAL 2002). They do not see the need to study physical education, cultures from other countries, science, etc. and therefore see education as irrelevant.



## Where Children Work

### *General*

In Appendix D, Del Cid provides an excellent and very complete matrix of child labor in Honduras. Drawing from that matrix, the most dangerous forms of child labor in urban centers are services, commerce, industry, construction and transportation. Typical urban jobs that children occupy include street vendors, fireworks fabrication, night work (such as pool halls and bars), bus conductors, construction and mechanics. Of these, fireworks fabrication is receiving a great deal of attention since every year children are killed in explosions related either to the fabrication or sale of fireworks.

In rural areas, where 70% of child labor occurs, occupations related to child laborers are services, commerce, industry, mining and agriculture, including the handling of agro-chemicals. The major abuses are exposure to the weather and chemicals. There also are problems with work in mines, although most mines now are managed by international mining corporations that are more careful about employing children. Finally, fishing is a problem, not only because the children are exposed to the sun and the sea, but also some forms of fishing require deep sea diving with the use of scuba gear. In these cases the dangers are impotence, paralysis and frequent exposure to drugs and alcohol.

In southern Honduras the most dangerous forms of child labor are the handling of agro-chemicals, as well as sexual exploitation of girls working in agricultural production and processing plants. The use of chemicals is especially associated with melon production (seen in the photo at the left), as well as the production of alternative export crops.



There is a category of work that could take place either in rural or urban areas. This category includes drug trafficking and working in sawmills. Central America is a trafficking center for drugs that come up from South America in planes and boats. Frequently they are deposited in rural areas, especially in the Mosquitia where there are no roads and a low governmental presence, for repackaging for their final destination, which is usually international. In the cities children, especially those involved

with street gangs, are used to carry drugs for local consumption.

Sawmills may be located either in rural or urban areas, depending on where it is most economical to cut the wood. The danger for children and youth is that the hand saws are so large, which is the rural danger, or powerful, which is the urban danger.

Certain forms of child labor are female predominant, such as domestic service, prostitution and market vendors. Prostitution used to be female only, but in recent years, especially in San Pedro Sula, boys have also been involved. Prostitution is also found near all port cities in the country. Domestic service is one of the “hidden jobs” that escape most of the census, but it has been linked with sexual abuse against females.

### ***The Agricultural Sectors in the Southern Cone***

The melon production and export industry hires the largest number of minors, especially for the tedious fieldwork. As each fruit nears its maturation workers turn it over a total of three times to guarantee equal exposure to the sun and an appearance that is pleasing to the consumer. IPEC estimates that 80% of melon workers are under age. Melon plants are cultivated twice a year, during the dry season, from October through June.



The melon packaging plants are relatively modern (see photo at left). After cleaning and sorting, the melons are transported by conveyor belt to where they are packaged, and then transported by fork lift to a cold room in preparation for the eight to 10-day journey to markets in the U.S. It is not uncommon to see young women 14-18 years old working in these packaging plants.

The melon farms are diversifying. One of the reasons is the instability of the price of melons. In the last 12 months, due to competition from Guatemala and Mexico, the price of melons in the U.S. has dropped from \$1.25 per melon to 75 cents. In some farms growers are already experimenting with alternative crops such as chili peppers and okra. This is important to note because some child labor specialists recommend changing the school year to coincide with the harvest season. However, by changing the crops the seasons also change, which would continuously complicate the school year issue.

Since growers hire adults on the basis of quantity of product harvested, many adults bring their families to help harvest. Some of these family members are young children. Girls between the ages of 14 to 18 participate in the selection process of peppers suitable for export. Okra is another example of a non-traditional export crop that is labor intensive.

Sugarcane production is the other industry often cited for child labor abuses. On farms that can count on water for irrigation, two sugarcane crops are cultivated and harvested each year. The cane grows so densely that the fields fill with many different animals, including snakes. For this reason, the crop is burned before it is harvested with machetes and loaded onto tractor-trailer and other trucks for transportation to the sugar processing plants. Another danger is that the trucks are so overloaded that they sometimes tip over, crushing those standing nearby.



The sugarcane companies traditionally subcontract the hiring of field hands to local companies. The local companies are notorious for disregarding child labor laws. However, in response to national and international pressure, the larger sugarcane companies have established policies insisting that their employees be 18 years of age or older. They have made it clear to the subcontractors that they too must comply.

The shrimp farming companies, which were almost as notorious as the melon producers for abusing child labor laws, have taken measures to correct the situation. Shrimp farming is lucrative, and the production of shrimp in Honduras is second only to Ecuador in the western hemisphere. Most of the shrimp that is produced is for export, which adds to the pressure of complying with international laws.

There are two levels of shrimp production in the south: the large, professional companies and much smaller, artisan farms. The large companies are conscious of their image, and have eliminated child labor in their companies. The family-based artisan farms depend on inexpensive child labor to assist with the different steps in the production, processing, and packaging processes.

When shrimp farming was first initiated in Honduras in the 70's and 80's, the cultivation of shrimp depended on the harvest of larvae that hatched naturally in the estuaries along the coast. The harvesting task was done primarily by children. This continues to tarnish the image of shrimp companies today, even though the procedure for larvae production has changed. As the companies grew in size, they needed to control the amount of larvae produced, rather than have their shrimp production depend on the amount of natural larvae harvested. Today, all the large companies have their own laboratories for the production of larvae, which has eliminated the need to hire youth to harvest larvae in the estuaries. The shrimp companies have also taken precautions to hire women above the age of 18 for their processing and packaging plants. There are still smaller plants that do not comply with child labor laws.



Salt production is another example of local industry that hires child labor. The quality of the salt produced in Honduras does not meet international standards. Most of the salt produced is consumed locally. Because of that, the equipment has not been modernized.

For example, Honduras has not acquired the equipment for adding iodine to the salt, and this is done unscientifically by hand. In Guatemala and Mexico, it is done by machine.

The salt flats also use rudimentary technology in the initial stages of salt processing. Seawater pours into shallow settling tanks during high tide. The concentration of salt in seawater is 3%. Following evaporation the

concentration rises to 20%. This water is then pumped to flats with tiled floors where the solar evaporation continues. Children are hired at this stage of the process to move the salt in the water with wooden scrapers in order to accelerate the final evaporation of water. The boy seen in the photo to the left can be seen stoking the fires below the salt water caldron. The salt is then loaded into sacks and hauled to the processing plants.

Some of the concentrated salt water is pumped into vats where it is boiled until all the water evaporates. While this is a faster process, it requires large quantities of wood. Also youth are employed to stoke the kilns with firewood. Due to problems of wood shortage in the south, this method of processing salt is gradually being eliminated.

The packaging of salt is remunerated on the basis of output. This is another example where adults, primarily mothers, bring their children to assist with the work, which consists of bagging the salt by hand. The sooner the quota is completed by each team of workers, the sooner they leave the plant. The dangerous part of this process is the auger that continually propels the salt from where it is downloaded from the truck to where it is bagged.

A small number of youth become serious fishermen at an early age. As children, they learn to fish by accompanying older fishermen. By the time they are teenagers they go to sea alone or with friends, leaving at 3:00 or 4:00 in the morning. This example of child labor is different from the others cited here because there is no direct employer of these youth. Their earnings come from the sale of their catch.

Digging for tiny clams is another example of small-scale child labor. Digging for clams that are submerged in mud along the coast is rough on the hands, and the kids who dig for clams can be recognized because of the scar tissue on their hands. Also, standing in the sun for long periods of time creates exposure problems as well as disease problems related to the mosquitoes.



The most prevalent form of child labor in the south is subsistence farming and domestic chores. Young girls and boys are expected to assist with daily tasks such as hauling wood and water, washing clothes, taking corn to the local mill, cleaning around the house, caring for siblings and the elderly, and assisting with the preparation of food. They also participate in the cultivation of family crops, either directly with planting, pesticide application, weeding, and harvesting, or indirectly by carrying food and water to those working in

the fields. The principal crops are corn and beans. In the higher elevations of Choluteca, coffee is an important crop, as well as large-scale cattle production.



Children participate in numerous activities which by international norms would be considered child labor, but which in Honduras seem to be part of every day life. For example, children can be seen selling a variety of products at road stands, or in the streets of the larger towns. Unfortunately, there is very little information about this tradition of child labor, but it definitely interferes with receiving an education.

There are two fundamental problems with child labor in the south of Honduras. The first is that the youth and their families need the work because they need the income, as exemplified by this typical rural home in the photo to the left. They aggressively, sometimes even illegally try to get any kind of work that is available.

The second problem is that there is a cultural tendency in Honduras to disregard the child labor laws. Powerful business interests wield more power than laws and justice. There are flagrant examples of non-compliance with the law, specifically related to child labor. When a former minister of labor traveled from Tegucigalpa to the south to personally inspect a melon farm, she was barred from entering the melon farm by the owners. The Ministry of Labor inspector stationed in Choluteca has fared no better. Coupled with the problems of limited funds and limited support, public authorities sometimes are rendered helpless in their efforts to combat child labor. Until the country can come to terms with this lawlessness, the business community will continue to exert control over issues as delicate and important as child labor.

### ***The Fishing Sector in the Mosquitia***

In a part of the country with limited employment and income generating alternatives, the lobster industry with an annual average export value of \$29 million represents opportunities for the local population that are beyond belief, and irresistible. The lobster industry is the gold mine of the Misquito people. Unfortunately, like most get-rich-quick ventures, it is provoking social havoc in Misquito communities. It is also taking its toll on the health of the divers.

The key actors in the lobster fishing industry are separated into five groups: the owners of the lobster businesses, the boat captains, the crew, the *sacabuzos*, who are members of the community who act as agents for the divers, the divers, and the divers' assistants known as *cayuqueros*, which means "those in the canoes".

Information related to the owners is sketchy. According to one boat captain in Puerto Lempira, there are five companies: two in Roatan, two in Guanaja, and one in La Ceiba. Chamber of Commerce representatives say that the owners are from the Bay Islands but that they spend much of their time in the U.S. A Chamber of Commerce is in the process of being formed in the Bay Islands, and it is anticipated that the lobster industry will be represented. Supposedly the lobster industry owners are aware that their image internationally is such that they may be sanctioned by the U.S. customs service.

The companies hire captains for their boats. There are a few cases of boats that are owned directly by the captains. The captains report to the companies to accomplish a number of basic tasks a few days before the boat takes off: basic boat maintenance, pick up oxygen tanks and compressors, arrange for the provisions for all those who will be on board, stock up on diesel, and review accounts with the company administrators. The captain is the maximum authority on the boat once it sets sail. The captain's income is based upon the quantity of lobster he brings back.

Each boat has a crew, among them the captain's assistant, the cook and his assistant, and other crew members who assist with basic maintenance as well as with servicing the oxygen tanks and receiving and weighing the lobsters which are brought to the boat by the divers.

The *sacabuzos* are the contact persons or agents in the coastal communities, or the intermediaries between the companies and the divers. The intermediaries are usually persons in the community who already have their own business and have experience with handling funds. In most cases these businesses are local markets. The companies contact the intermediaries with information related to the date the boat will arrive and the number of divers who can fit on board. Advances of roughly \$6,500 are sent to the intermediaries' bank accounts. The intermediary receives compensation of \$27 for each diver who boards the boat. The number of divers depends on the size of the boat: it can range from 30 to as many as 70. The intermediaries have short wave radios in their homes for constant communication with the companies and the boats.

Most of the divers are Misquitos. Almost all are young adults. Compared with other income generating opportunities in their communities, fishing for lobster is lucrative work. The compensation at the present time is \$3.30 per pound of lobster, (as compared to 66 cents per pound of conch). At the end of a twelve-day diving expedition, a diver can earn \$1,000. Thirty years ago, lobsters were fished in shallower waters, and the divers would dive without using tanks. But that was the heyday of the lobster business, when divers, captains, and the companies made lots of money. The shallow waters have been depleted of lobster, so in order to find lobster the boats need to travel further to sea, and the divers need to descend to greater depths. Oxygen tanks are a necessity for lobster fishing today. The divers descend to depths of 110 to 120 feet.

The divers use their own masks and basic diving equipment. The companies provide the tanks and the compressor to keep them filled with oxygen. Each diver identifies an assistant who is called the *cayuquero*. When the boat picks up the divers, it also picks up one assistant per diver and the canoe. The assistant is responsible for hovering over the spot where the diver has submerged into the sea, trying to keep the canoe steady, prevent it from drifting, and keeping watch for the diver's bubbles. Each canoe is assigned four oxygen tanks. The diver descends with two tanks, and leaves two in the canoe. The big boat circulates among the canoes and fills the tanks that have been used by the divers.



The assistant plays a critical role in relation to the safety and well being of the diver. For this reason, the diver usually identifies someone that he can trust completely. The divers and assistants who were interviewed responded that there was almost always a family relationship between the diver and the assistant. Most of the assistants are teenagers. Many of them are considered divers-in-training. Some of them become divers when there are opportunities for them to do so.

The diver descends with a harpoon. When he sees lobster of adequate size, he kills it by spiking the head with the harpoon. The dead lobsters are piled in one place at the bottom of the sea. When the diver notes that he is running short of oxygen, he grabs as many of the lobster as he can and swims to the surface. This is one of the moments of danger. The diver does not want to lose the lobster he has in a pile at the bottom of the sea. There is also the possibility that the dead lobster will attract larger predators. So there is pressure on the diver to get to the top as fast as possible and descend again for the remaining lobster. The quick ascents without the necessary stops along the way for decompression can cause partial or total paralysis and/or impotency.

Normally, the boats prepare for twelve-day fishing expeditions. The boat typically travels a full day to reach the keys off of the eastern coast of Honduras in search of lobster. Some boats have traveled far into the Caribbean. After twelve days at sea, the boat sails back and drops the divers and assistants off at their communities, and then sails to the Bay Islands to unload the lobster at the packaging plants. A few days are devoted to basic maintenance and stocking up with food and diesel, and the boat sets sail again. The routine repeats itself for eight months out of the year. As a result of the depletion of the lobster supply, Honduras has imposed a four-month moratorium on lobster fishing from April through July.

The records kept by the crew of the quantities of lobster fished by each diver are shared with the intermediary when the boat returns to shore. The intermediary assumes the responsibility of paying each diver. The diver pays his assistant \$200 for each twelve-day period.

Two factors have been identified as making diving for lobster more dangerous. The first has to do with the depleted availability of lobster. This not only means that the diver must dive in deeper waters, but it also heightens the desperation of the diver to find more lobster. Consequently, they stay down longer than they should, thereby necessitating risky rapid ascents when their oxygen runs low.

The other factor is drug-related. The eastern tip of Honduras is a landing point for drug traffickers from Colombia. According to sources in Gracias a Dios, the drug dealers dump their bales of drugs on purpose, either off the coast or directly on land, as a strategy to avoid detection. They may also dump their loads because they are being pursued by law enforcement. It is not uncommon to hear the locals in Gracias a Dios talk about finding bales of drugs washed up on shore or in the fields. The drug dealers offer to purchase it, so most of the drugs end up back in the hands of the dealers. However, a portion of the drugs circulates locally, and there is talk of more and more drug use by the local population of Gracias a Dios.

Divers are known to use drugs before diving for lobster. Part of the assistant's responsibilities is to keep cigarettes, drugs and matches dry in the canoes so that the diver can have access to the drugs when he surfaces from a dive. The drugs obviously impact the diver's capacity to reason, which leads to accidents. One paralyzed diver said that he was high when he went down. While he was down he mistook a coral for a strange animal and panicked, and swam to the surface as fast as he could. Another veteran diver said that he smoked marijuana before diving, and that he lost consciousness at the bottom of the sea. He still doesn't know or understand how he recovered sufficient consciousness to return to the surface. He was paralyzed, and taken to a decompression chamber in Roatan where he was treated for eight days. He was cured of his paralysis, although there are some lingering mental problems.

The general attitude of the divers toward precautions and safety might best be described as irresponsible. MOPAWI, one of the leading NGO's in Gracias a Dios, arranged for extensive training for the divers. Part of the strategy was that divers would require a certificate that they had successfully passed the course before being allowed to board a boat. The divers quickly learned how to forge the certificates, so divers who had not taken the course would not be prevented from fishing for lobster.

When divers' accidents began to be publicized by the national and international press, several well know seafood restaurants were directly involved in lobster fishing off the coast of Honduras. As a result of bad press, Red Lobster disassociated itself from lobster fishing, and arranged for intermediaries to assume a more direct role. The result is that the lobster industry has been organized in such a way that no one is accountable. No one seems to know who the company owners are, or what their nationality is, or to what extent they are responsible in the event of an accident. The captains do their best to remain anonymous, going on a first-name basis. The *sacabuzos* claim that they are intermediaries and that they have no responsibility for the divers' well being. Families of divers who have been crippled first approach the community intermediary, only to be told that they should go directly to the company. Several sources stated that the role of the intermediary was invented precisely to prevent legal claims from reaching the companies.

Enough people have complained directly to the Ministry of Labor and to the Human Rights Commission that both institutions are taking action. The Human Rights Commission began by conducting a survey of all the divers in Gracias a Dios. The Ministry of Labor hired an employee to live and work in Puerto Lempira, but this person turned out to be less than honest and is at the present time a fugitive of the law. The Ministry is in the process of identifying another person in order to establish a permanent presence in Gracias a Dios. The Ministry also passed a law to protect the rights of those involved in the lobster diving industry. Unfortunately having laws in writing is one thing, enforcing them is quite another.

Divers admit that they have done little to get organized. People who know the culture say that this would be difficult. The executive director of MOPAWI stated that they have tried to promote the organization of the divers without success. Instead, the divers' reputation is one of returning from their expeditions and squandering their funds on alcohol, drugs, and prostitution.



They are so reckless with their funds that they often run out of money before the next expedition, and it is common for divers to approach the intermediaries for advances prior to heading out to sea again. Unfortunately, the advances are used in much the same way that the divers squander their pay. This is provoking social havoc in Misquito communities. One disheartening comment from a source in Puerto Lempira was that the divers have become role models for the youth in the Misquito communities: young boys and girls are attracted to this ostentatious, carefree, reckless lifestyle.

The only divers' association that has legal recognition is AMBLI, which is the Misquito Association of Hurt Divers. However, it is an association with limited support and influence. The headquarters in Puerto Lempira is a tiny wooden shack measuring one meter by two meters. Estimates of the number of hurt divers vary. The Central Bank of Honduras estimates the number at 2,000. Another source said that of a total of 9,000 divers, 47% have been hurt. However, the most recent survey conducted by the Human Rights Commission tells another story. It identified a total of 2,435 divers. Of those, 290 are hurt but continue to dive; 126 are partially paralyzed; 40 are totally paralyzed; 30 died; and 1,949 continue diving without having registered any health problems. Only four of the divers are reported to be minors.

## **New Child Labor Interventions in Honduras**

### ***The National Commission for the Gradual and Progressive Elimination of Child Labor***

This Commission was created by executive order in 1998. It is charged with the overall responsibility of coordinating child labor activities throughout the country. In order to do so it has formed sub-commissions in all of the 18 departments of the country. It is the sub-commissions, meeting regularly at least in the south of the country, who actually monitor child labor abuses.

The Commission published two important documents in the battle against child labor: General Diagnosis of the Situation of Child Labor in Honduras (Comisión Nacional para la Erradicación Gradual y Progresiva del Trabajo Infantil 2001), and National Action Plan for Child Labor in Honduras (Comisión Nacional para la Erradicación Gradual y Progresiva del Trabajo Infantil 2001). The National Plan includes a month-by-month agenda of activities that is slightly behind schedule. The new government was scheduled to officially recognize the plan in May 2002, thereby reinvigorating the implementation of the national plan.

### ***US Government Interventions***

Every year the American Embassy submits reports to the State Department, detailing issues such as human rights and forced labor. The impact of those reports can be very powerful in developing countries since they can create impetus for change or attract unwanted attention.

The office of the US Labor Attaché in Honduras monitors trafficking and child labor on a regular basis. The Attaché has organized meetings at which child labor was discussed with the private sector and government officials and has invited the participation of other US Government entities. One of those entities is the office of the US Customs Service based in Panama.

One of the responsibilities of the US Customs Office is monitoring forced labor. Any products considered produced under the conditions of forced labor could be banned for importation into the United States. On more than one occasion Customs inspectors have reviewed the issue of forced labor in Honduras. The observations of the Customs inspector have been reported to the Honduran Government. To date, Customs has not reported the presence of forced labor, however there is concern.

Another US-sponsored program is EDUCATODOS, a non-traditional basic education program that has been supported by USAID for 10 years. This activity strives to deliver basic education where people need it, and thereby avoids the major cost to government of constructing schools, and the major cost to beneficiaries of paying for transportation to go to the school. This year there are approximately 88,000 persons matriculated in EDUCATODOS.

In addition, USAID has supported the strengthening of institutions related to vocational education, such as the Centro Asesor para el Desarrollo de los Recursos Humanos de Honduras (CADERH).

### ***NGO Activity***

For many years Honduras has benefited from a broad, active array of national and international NGOs. NGO participation grew even more robust in response to the hurricane Mitch disaster in 1998. The NGOs form a “go between” between government and the people. Appendix D is an anecdotal list of NGOs that are involved in development in the southern cone (Mejía 2002) as well as on the northeastern coast. The Honduran government has a history of using NGOs to provide education to difficult to reach populations.

### ***ILO/IPEC***

The International Labor Organization (ILO) is actively involved in the eradication of child labor in Honduras through its International Program for the Elimination of Child Labor (IPEC).

ILO/IPEC has conducted rapid assessments of child labor issue associated with the melon industry, the lobster diving industry and the coffee industry. ILO/IPEC is in the process of launching projects to combat child labor in the departments of Santa Bárbara (coffee) and Choluteca (melons).



## IV. THE SITUATION OF EDUCATION IN HONDURAS

### General

Education in general throughout Latin America is struggling to catch up to basic standards that have been established in other parts of the world. In a publication entitled “Staying Behind” (PREAL and FERMA 2001), the Program for the Promotion of Educational Reform in Latin America and the Caribbean (PREAL) identified fundamental reasons why education in this hemisphere remains deficient.

To complement the report on overall educational conditions in Latin America, PREAL also issues a “report card” (PREAL and FERMA 2002) for each of the countries in Latin America. The report card for Honduras was formally presented in Tegucigalpa the same month this study was conducted. The introduction of the report card states that, “in spite of the observed improvements in certain indicators, Honduras continues to demonstrate deficiencies in the implementation of reforms to improve substantially the quality, efficiency, and equity of education.” The only area in which Honduras received a good grade was in access and coverage. However, in the areas of efficiency, standards and evaluation, local responsibility and authority, and public sector support, it received a “C.” And in quality, equity, and teacher competence and remuneration, it received a “D.”

In comparison to the other countries cited, Honduras does not fare well. Some examples include:

- On the basis of the test scores of third graders in math and Spanish<sup>3</sup>, Honduras was last out of 12 countries.
- In the percentage of 20-25 year olds who had completed primary school, Honduras was fourth from last out of 15 countries.
- In the percentage of 20-25 year olds who had completed secondary education, Honduras was second to last out of 15 countries.

The challenges presented in the PREAL report for improving educational standards in Honduras are:

- Increase the coverage of Hondurans in the education system, with special emphasis on equity (rural population, ethnic groups, the poor);
- Insist that quality be at the center of all matters related to educational reform;

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<sup>3</sup> Tests prepared and administered by UNESCO.

- Decentralize the educational system: empower local personnel and communities with increased authority;
- Strengthen the role of the teacher, including compensation, participation in decision-making, and improved instructional capability;
- Increase public spending and support for education;
- Increase the availability of statistics and statistical analysis for more accurate measurements of the impact of education in the Honduran society.

One of the sectors that is most affected by the deficiencies in the education system is the rural population. This is especially problematic at the secondary level. The following table presents a comparison of access rates and completion rates, contrasting urban and rural, and male and female (Steenwyk 2001).

Table 1. School Access and Completion Rates

	Initial Access Rates				Completion Rates			
	Urban		Rural		Urban		Rural	
	Male %	Female %	Male %	Female %	Male %	Female %	Male %	Female %
Pre-school	31	37	16	17	29	35	15	16
Primary	134 <sup>4</sup>	138	156	162	74	82	57	58
Jr. High	97	104	7	8	46	62	4	5
High School	48	59	4	6	29	35	3	4

The data presented in this table demonstrate that the percentage of rural youth who complete junior high or senior high studies is low. It is equally disturbing to note that a very high percentage of rural teenage youth do not even access secondary schools. This is partly because they lack the motivation to do so, but also because there simply are not very many secondary programs in rural areas of Honduras. This is an important point relevant to the focus of this study. Since 70% of child labor in Honduras can be found in the agricultural sector, and since more than 88% of the child labor force is 13 years or older, there is a definite relationship between access to secondary school in rural zones and youth in the labor force.

<sup>4</sup> Gross enrollment rates can surpass 100% since they include re-enrollees who may be out of the age range of the cohort group.



While most of the information related to education in Honduras paints a bleak picture, there has been progress in general education and literacy during the past twenty-five years. The national average years of schooling doubled from 2.3 years in 1974 to 4.6 in 1997. The national illiteracy rate dropped from 40% in 1974 to 17% in 1997. In urban areas, the illiteracy rate dropped from 19% to 10% over this period, while urban years in school rose from 4 to 6 years. In rural areas, illiteracy dropped from 51% to 23%, while years in school rose from 1.4 to 3.3 years. Primary school enrollment at the national level is over 90%, and pre-school enrollment has more than doubled during the past decade (World Bank 2001).

**Valle and Choluteca**

Honduras is presently engaged in educational reform and is extending primary schooling from 6 to 9 years, or through the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. However, as shown in the table below there is a serious problem reflected in decreased enrollment in the transition from primary school to junior high in Valle.

While over 90% of Valle’s primary school children enroll in school, the enrollment in secondary drops to 27%. Part of the problem is that many of the children who enroll in primary school do not complete the year in which they are enrolled. The educational conditions in the south of Honduras are generally representative of those throughout the country since more than half of the population lives in rural communities because there are only a few urban centers.

**Table 2. Comparative Matriculation Rates for Valle<sup>5</sup> (Mejía 2002).**

Level	Ages	Population	Enrolled in school	Percentage
Preschool	4-6 years	15,423	5,715	37.05%
Primary	7-13 years	33,494	31,482	93.99%
Secondary	14-19 years	25,503	6,973	27.34%

Educational improvements in recent years cited by the departmental Director of Education in Choluteca include:

- Improved distribution of texts and materials;
- Improvements to infrastructure;
- Teacher training;
- Reduced illiteracy;
- Incorporation of junior high years as an extension of primary schools.

<sup>5</sup> Oddly enough, the Department of Education in Valle is one of the best sources in the country of statistics related to education in its department. For instance, the information in the table is up to date within one month of when this study was conducted.

However, the constraints cited by the same director are compelling:

- Budgetary restrictions;
- High rates of desertion and repetition;
- Poor instructional quality;
- Persistence of the traditional curriculum;
- Very limited coordination between Civil Society, Institutions and NGO's;
- Poor administrative services.

This list of deficiencies includes issues presented by PREAL for Latin America in general. For instance, the quality of instruction is poor, resulting in primary school graduates barely capable of reading, writing, and calculations of basic arithmetic. The curriculum is not relevant to local needs, and parents (especially in rural areas) are frustrated by what they perceive as their children's lack of progress in school, especially in relation and response to local needs.

Teachers are not motivated, and it is common for them to miss school days. Some estimates of actual school days are as low as 100 days per year<sup>6</sup>. For the average student in a rural area, the school year is interrupted too often by poor weather (e.g., heavy rains or extreme heat), the need to help with family work (e.g., planting season or harvest), and the need to work to earn additional income for the family.

### **Atlántida, Colon, and Gracias a Dios**

The characteristics of the public school system in the Mosquitia are similar in some ways to the schools in the southern cone, and different in others. For instance, the schools in Atlántida and Colon are similar to the general profile of rural and urban schools in the rest of the country. Gracias a Dios, however, is different. One of the ways it is different is that it has not been possible to collect educational statistics from Gracias a Dios. A former MOPAWI employee who managed an intercultural bilingual education program said that it was imperative to determine how many youth attend school, repetition rates, desertion, failures, and average ages of students when they complete primary school. The information simply is not available. Unfortunately, to date the only ways we can estimate the data from Gracias a Dios is by observation and opinions of those who live there.

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<sup>6</sup> By comparison, there are 180 in the US, and over 200 in Japan.



A total of 1,943 youth (6% of the eligible population) are enrolled in secondary schools in Gracias a Dios. This number is low for several reasons:

- There are a limited number of schools at the secondary level;
- There are not enough teachers prepared to teach at the secondary level;
- Girls leave school due to teenage pregnancies;
- Boys and girls are under pressure to help out with work and chores;
- Boys and girls are under pressure to contribute to the family income;
- Students may be 15 years old by the time they complete primary level, and feel too old to continue with secondary;
- Youth and their families don't appreciate the value of education;
- Youth and their families are discouraged by the poor quality of existing educational programs.

One of the constraints in the educational system in Gracias a Dios is the inherent need for bilingual education. Eighty percent of the population grow up speaking Misquito, which is the predominant language spoken at home. Of all the teachers in Gracias a Dios, 80% are Misquito. However, the law states that classes in Honduran schools must be taught in Spanish. The language barrier presents serious obstacles. The Director of the Instituto Gracias a Dios in Puerto Lempira stated that the students who haven't had sufficient contact with Spanish simply don't understand. He also insisted that the language barrier is not the only problem: teachers are not trained to cope with issues stemming from bilingual education. Inevitably, the students suffer the consequences.

The Intercultural Bilingual Education Program (IBE) was initiated by MOPAWI in 1994 with funding from the Methodist Relief Development Fund, Tearfund, and the Kellogg Foundation. IBE was in direct response to the imposition of Spanish on the Misquito population by the Honduran government. Insisting on education in Spanish resulted in much higher failure and desertion rates, with decreased emphasis on the Misquito language and cultural values. Under IBE, an intercultural and bilingual curriculum was developed, teachers were trained, and IBE was introduced in twenty pre-school programs and twenty schools.

Today, the Ministry of Education officials in Puerto Lempira speak highly of the program and insist on the need for additional support of bilingual program activities. The Ministry of Education in Tegucigalpa is being petitioned for this support. MOPAWI is also contacting international organizations for additional funding.

Unfortunately, the Honduran government does not have a good image or positive track record in the field of education in Gracias a Dios. By and large, this department has been neglected by the government. When there was a territorial dispute with Nicaragua focused on the southern border of Gracias a Dios, the Honduran government wanted to be sure that the Misquitos who lived on the Honduran side of the border were Honduran first and Misquito second. They sent teachers accompanied by soldiers to force youth to attend school and receive their coursework in Spanish. The popular response to this tactic was not positive.

During the 1940's, the Moravian Church established a school called Instituto Técnico Vocacional y Educación Moral (ITVEM) close to Brus Lagun. This school became a teacher-training institute, and many of the better teachers in Gracias a Dios received their training at ITVEM. Several sources stated that the Moravian Church has done more for education in Gracias a Dios than the Honduran government.

Another educational program worth mentioning in this assessment is called Sistema de Aprendizaje Tutorial (SAT). This program was developed in Colombia, and introduced to Honduras by Bayán, (Asociación de Desarrollo Socio-Económico Indígena), a local NGO that was founded in 1985 in La Ceiba with projects on the north coast, including a hospital in Palacios, Gracias a Dios.



## **V. THE NEEDS OF HONDURAN WORKING CHILDREN**

### **General**

The needs of Honduran working children can be summarized in three categories: They need to provide financial support for their families; they need to work because it is culturally expected of them, and; they need their rights to be respected.

### **Support for Their Families**

Children believe that they need to work to help support their families. This point came out frequently in the focus groups, and other adults, such as mayors, reiterated it. Whether this is an actual need, or a need perceived by adults and transmitted to the children is different issue.

These issues become important in determining whether or not children are correct in believing they must work to help support their families. In almost all cases of the families in this report, the income of the families was below the national definition of poverty.

It is true that people in the southern cone and northeastern coast believe they are poor. Indeed, there is an inadequate supply of educational facilities in both target locations, salaries are low, employment opportunities are scarce and in the Mosquitia there is a shortage of public services and health facilities.

One issue that arises is the issue of children and youth replacing adults in the work force. In both target areas adults complain that there is no work, but there is a lot of work for children. Because there are many children who flood the workforce and will work for low wages, adults who need to receive a full salary in order to support their families find it difficult to do so. Consequently, parents feel poor and insinuate to their children that they too should work.

In a sense the need for children to work comes from the adults who are not able to secure employment that pays a decent wage. But in fact, the issue is circular: children work because the families are poor, and one of the reasons families are poor is because children flood the job market. The same cycle will be present in the next generation unless children are removed from the job market and educated beyond the level of 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

### **Need to Behave in Concert with their Cultures**

Children need to work because to do so is culturally ingrained. This point came out in discussions with the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labor and the parents themselves.

Parents and government officials indicated work is highly valued. The insinuation was that work held a moral value in society. It would be wise to differentiate between work being highly valued as a source of income and being highly valued because “work is good”. In this matter there seems to be some confusion.

The cultural compulsion to work is coming from the parents. Children are told from the beginning that they need to work. There were no parents interviewed for this study that indicated that education had a higher value than work. In fact, they all argued that although they respected education, it had little value in the rural culture, which they see as a working culture.

Curiously, they may be correct in a sense. Some of the businesses interviewed asked the question “What will the young people do after they acquire their education”? A similar question was voiced by US Embassy officials, “What about the school to work linkage”? There is no easy response to these questions.

An additional cultural issue is language. In the Mosquitia the dominant language is Mosquito. Nevertheless, the government insists that schools must be taught in Spanish. Many Misquito children drop out of school because of language difficulties. Once out of school there is nothing else to do but work.

### **Respect for Their Rights**

Children and adults need to know their rights. This point came from interviews at USAID, the American Embassy and UNICEF.

Most children and adults in poor areas are not aware of the fact they have rights. In theory, human rights are guaranteed to all Honduran citizens, and the Convention for the Rights of the Child has been ratified in Honduras. Honduran children in rural zones, however, not only did not know they had rights, but would not know how to raise a rights issue even if they did know. On the practical level Paulo Freire was right; the poor—especially the poor from rural zones-- have no voice.

### **Education**

Children in the two target areas need basic education. This point came from the Ministry of Education and USAID.

There is a scarcity of educational opportunities beyond primary school in the two target areas. Even in primary school there is a great deal of drop out. Besides, if one interprets the results of the PREAL report card for Honduras, one must ask whether or not anything useful is happening even if the children do attend school.

Furthermore, how will children and youth use their educations? There are few alternative sources of employment in either target area. From the meeting with the private sector, one received the impression that the business community felt they were doing children and youth a favor by providing work opportunities.

A question raised by the US Embassy is: What about the school work linkage? This question brings up the issue of what do children/youth do after they graduate from 6<sup>th</sup> grade if they do not attend secondary school. In all likelihood they are not yet old enough to work, and secondary school may be too expensive or just not relevant.



One easy answer to this question is: vocational training. Other than review the roles and functioning of the Instituto Nacional de Fomento Profesional (INFOP, a semi-autonomous government entity for organizing and providing occupational training) and CADERH, an NGO that provides occupational training for INFOP in remote areas, this report has not delved into the topic of vocational training. It is not a part of this report because it is a topic worthy of study in itself. It is true, however, that both INFOP and CADERH are beginning to offer some basic education opportunities along with their vocational training.

Another concern is that providing vocational training to youths will encourage them to begin working before they become adults. They will acquire and practice their skills in training, and will immediately look for a place to use those skills for remuneration. The point of this discussion is that there seem to be only three solutions to the school/work linkage: more school, vocational training, or premature entry into the workforce.



## VI. FINDINGS

The following findings were generated by the methodology described earlier in this document. All findings were vetted with stakeholders and the American Mission. Observations by the stakeholders were incorporated in the findings.

### Child Labor

#### *Finding #1 - The problem of child labor exists:*<sup>7</sup>

- At the family level;
- At the level of the private sector; and
- At the level of compliance with the law.

The researchers interviewed numerous parents of working children and the children themselves in Valle and Choluteca. Not one of the parents saw working, to the exclusion of education, as a problem. Also, the working children always stated that they preferred to work as opposed to attending school. These attitudes towards education are a problem to long-term socio-economic development, although the parents and children did not see it that way.

Most private sector representatives admit to sometimes employing children or youth. When the researchers explained that it was possible that an education program for working youth might result from this research, they seemed pleased and interested. One was given the impression that they would be willing to support the activity, at least to some extent, through the company.

One source at USAID raised the question of whether or not supporting working children by providing education to them at the work site would, in fact, be considered encouraging child labor. After some discussion a consensus emerged that the greater good served by assuring a child's right to an education would outweigh the idea of condoning child labor. Also, one participant mentioned that the children would still be working—without any hope of breaking the cycle of poverty if ECACL did not provide a pilot project in education. Therefore, working and receiving an education was a more humane solution than just working.

Child labor is a problem at the level of compliance with the law because of numerous reasons. One is that public officials like prosecutors and labor inspectors have no resources to help them investigate cases. Officials have no vehicles to visit child labor sites or discuss cases with those who file complaints. One public defender admitted that he had never known a case where

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<sup>7</sup> See table in Appendix D for specific data.

sanctions were applied for breaking a child labor law. Another compliance problem is that some businesses refuse to allow inspectors to make on-site inspections. Then, when the inspectors send a report of such incidents up the bureaucratic ladder, the issue is eventually lost in the process.

***Finding #2 - The problem of child labor is recognized by some sectors, but not all.***

Recognized by:

Government (central and local);  
 The private sector;  
 Donors (national and international); and  
 NGOs.

Not recognized by:

The general public;  
 Parents in low-income rural areas; and  
 Children and youth in low-income, rural areas.

Government officials from the Secretaría de Trabajo, Secretaría de Educación and the Ministerio Público all demonstrated knowledge of child labor issues and interest in complying with the law. The private sector also demonstrated knowledge of the issues. Some of that awareness came about as a result of the visit from the US Customs Office.

Donors such as USAID, IPEC and UNICEF are well aware of child labor issues. So are the multilateral banks. Until now their awareness has not translated into anti-child labor projects.

The international NGOs, such as CARE and SAVE, are well aware of child labor issues. SAVE/UK participated with the Honduran government in drafting the child labor action plan. CARE has a regional office in the Southern cone and has been administering loans to small and micro businesses in the heart of child labor farm country in Choluteca and Valle.

Nevertheless, the general public does not seem to be aware of what the child labor issue is all about. The newspapers are filled with articles about children's and youth issues, including kidnapping, child abuse, infanticide, gangs and delinquency, but there was not a single article about child labor in the three weeks that the researchers were there reading the daily newspapers.

Low-income parents from rural areas do not recognize child labor as a problem. Neither do their children. Of fifty-five parents and children who participated in focus groups, not one defended the role of education. Every one of them defended the importance of work, either because it was a financial necessity for the family, or because school was unrewarding.

Many families employ domestic servants, some of whom are still minors. Those families defend that employment, even to minors, by saying that the children were not attending school anyway,



and by pointing out that employers sometimes provide extra support in case of health problems or family emergencies.

## **Education**

***Finding #3 - Better coordination is required in and between institutions addressing the problem.***

- At the civil society level;
- At the level of the sub-commissions for the Elimination of Child Labor;
- At the level of NGOs; and
- At the level of international institutions.

Two kinds of coordination are required. The first one is the intra-institutional, or the ability of an institution to coordinate within itself. Why would a pilot project be approved if the stakeholders knew from the start that even if the pilot were successful it would not be sustainable? Although this situation exists, it can only be explained if short-term planners and long-term planners fail to communicate. Another example addresses the needs of labor inspectors or prosecutors to review work conditions. If an official is not provided with the resources, like time and transportation, to do the job, then we should not expect them to be successful.

The other coordination is inter-institutional. This is the coordination that takes place between, for example, a government institution and an NGO; or between a donor and a mayor. This is the easier of the two forms of coordination to strengthen, because problems are easier to see, and usually inter-institutional agreements are officialized by a contract.

Sometimes it is necessary to coordinate between programs, such as between educational programs and NGOs or donors. In these cases, coordination will increase the efficiency and efficacy of the outcomes of the projects.

## **Partners**

***Finding #4 - Useful initiatives to promote education and combat child labor already exist.***

A few examples are:

- Sponsors of educational programs;
- Educational supplements by government and industry;
- Good non-traditional basic education programs, e.g. EDUCATODOS, SAT and Maestro en Casa;
- Political will and the civil sector seems willing to confront the problem;

- Government;
- Private sector;
- NGOs; and
- Donors.

There are many positive conditions in Honduras that make one think that education for working children is achievable. For one thing, government, through the Ministry of Education, provides some limited scholarships to poor children. The labor code states that businesses with more than 10 employees must pay a once per year education bonus to their employees. The amount of the bonus is \$30 that may seem small, but it is the equivalent of eight days of the minimum wage, a not insignificant amount.

In fact, the school “*bonos*” (small scholarships) represent an incentive approach to increasing school attendance and reducing child labor. It should be noted that the food incentive has also been tried. CARE conducted a comparative evaluation of the effectiveness of “*bonos*” vs. “*meriendas*” (school snacks). That evaluation showed that both approaches were effective, however the scholarships were much more economical and easier to administer than the food incentive.

Also, there are at least four recognized, non-traditional approaches to basic education that are operational in Honduras. All of these approaches succeed in bringing education to the learners instead of insisting that the learners come to the school. None of these approaches requires a school building, although sometimes they use schools after regular school hours. There is reason to believe that the curricula used in these programs are more relevant to the needs of the learners than the curriculum of regular public schools.

One frequent suggestion for keeping children in school is adjusting the school calendar to avoid holding classes during the harvest seasons. In the case of southern Honduras, this solution is not recommended. There are many different harvest seasons effecting children in Choluteca and Valle. It would be impossible to settle on one calendar period as school vacation. Also, the seasons sometimes change in accordance with crop prices. For instance, due to falling prices for melons, some farms have quickly switched from melons to chilies and okra. That would imply a new harvest season and a quick change of school year for the Department of Education.

All sectors of government and civil society seem to support the concept of education for children who have to work. Government provides support to programs that make that possible. Some members of the private sector already provide educational opportunities to their employees. Others are asking for information about how to apply the mechanism.

NGO’s are aware of the issues and eager to help, although up to now there has been little funding from donors.



## Community

### ***Finding #5 - The cycle of poverty and the culture of the parents are the principal causes of child labor.***

Many parents of low-income families pressure the children to support the family income. Some children prefer to work rather than go to school. Many parents and children from low-income families do not understand the importance of education.

Undoubtedly, a complicated phenomenon like child labor could be blamed on any number of causes. UNICEF has identified poverty as a major cause. Discussions with the rural, low-income parents revealed that their families, historically, had never had access to financial resources. That means that the cycle of poverty is real. It goes from grandparent, to parent, to the children, and will continue unless the cycle is broken.

The fact that the children spoke of liking work was not convincing. The kind of work they are doing, like hoeing salt flats, or bending over picking chilies all day in the sun, or picking mollusks out of the ocean with their hands cannot be fun for anyone. The authors of this study believe that the children reflect what they hear from their parents. A child who is told she has to work will soon do so happily, because there is no alternative.

### ***Finding #6 - Child labor represents a problem for:***

- The national economy;
- The image of Honduras in the outside world;
- Children's rights;
- The general welfare of children; and
- The participation of Honduras in globalization.

Honduras' image is even more important in the age of globalization than it was before. The name "Honduras" still conjures up the image of Chiquita banana and the prototype "banana republic". This image does little to promote international investment in Honduras at a time when investors are looking for low-cost, conflict-free labor sources.

Honduras has ratified the Convention on the Rights of Children. Unfortunately, its inability to implement the clauses of the CRC leaves almost half of the population, from six to 17 years of age, unable to enjoy the rights guaranteed to them by the convention, including education.

The welfare of children who work in the worst forms of child labor obviously suffers. But even children who work in non-abusive forms of child labor suffer if it causes them to miss school.

Children, in order to grow into fully functioning adults, need certain developmental activities. Those activities include time to rest, play and attend school.

In the globalized economy, investors not only want inexpensive labor, they also seek stability at the national level. When a country's businesses are employing children that assures at least three unwelcome outcomes:

- Children and youth will not develop into the best workers they could be;
- Children will not develop into consumers with a disposable income; and
- Industry that employs child laborers could be sanctioned.

***Finding #7 - Parents need much more awareness of the nature of the problem of child labor.***

Focusing on:

- The importance and value of the education of the parents themselves;
- The importance and value of the education of the children; and
- The awareness of the negative impact of child labor.

Promoting and strengthening awareness is a frequent developmental activity. The tricks are to make certain that the message is the right one, to assure the message is being heard and understood, and that the message is targeting the most appropriate audience. The researchers' conclusions are that the most appropriate audience is the parents themselves. This conclusion was enthusiastically supported by stakeholders during sessions in Choluteca and Tegucigalpa.

It is the parents who are in a position to insist that the children attend school at least part-time. It is the parents who shape the opinions of how their children feel about work and school. And finally, it is the parents who are in a position to control the flow of labor to the farms and companies. The parents control child labor.



## VII. KEY STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

### **Which form of child labor should be targeted by the ECACL pilot project?**

There are actually two different decisions to be made in the selection of the venue of the pilot program. Decision number one is: Should the pilot project target the southern cone or the northeastern coast? If the decision is the southern cone, then a further decision has to be made to determine in which department to target the pilot, Valle or Choluteca.

### ***Which Form of Child Labor is More Abusive?***

There are two potential areas discussed in this study in which the pilot project could be implemented. Each area has its own form of abusive child labor.

- Southern Cone:
  - Fieldwork with chemicals;
  - Exposure to the sun and animals; and
  - Limited educational opportunities.
  
- The Mosquitia:
  - Exposure to drugs and alcohol;
  - Danger of being lost at sea;
  - Danger from extended exposure to the sun; and
  - Almost no educational opportunities.

Note that the above abusive forms of child labor do not mention the injuries that derive from diving. That is because there are only four underage divers. There are approximately 1,200 under aged divers assistants, but they are exposed to different dangers than the divers.

### ***Which Area, All Factors Considered, Is the Most Viable in Which to Make an Impact?***

1. It would be possible to impact more children in the southern cone than in Gracias a Dios.

There are no exact estimates of child workers in the Southern Cone, because as discussed in the report many of the workers are under aged but are working under false documentation or special permits from the Ministry of Labor. Nevertheless, an estimate of 15,000 child/youth workers in Choluteca and Valle would seem reasonable. From that, approximately 40%, or 6,000 children/youth would be from Valle, judging by the relative populations of the two departments.

In Gracias a Dios there are approximately 1,200 eligible children/youth for the educational benefits of the proposed pilot program.

2. In the Southern Cone, it would be better to work in Valle than in Choluteca.

ILO/IPEC has already begun implementation of a large, integrated program to combat child labor in Choluteca. There is no such program planned by anyone in Valle.

Given the extreme abusive nature of being a diver in Gracias a Dios, and the fact that most of the divers come from the ranks of diver assistants, it would be wise to conduct a preventative child labor program with the 1,200 diver assistants.

It should also be kept in mind that many of the divers' assistants are considered to be divers in training. Therefore, one could argue that by providing education to the divers' assistants it would be a developmental means of protecting future divers.

3. Measuring results can be better achieved in Valle than Choluteca or Gracias a Dios.

Valle has a superior statistical support system in the Department of Education. Incorporating that particular office in the program would be fairly simple and would assure better assessment of some of the indicators.

Also, in Gracias a Dios there is no accurate measure of educational statistics.

4. Gracias a Dios presents many very complicated variables that impact the outcome of the pilot, thereby potentially skewing the data.

Those variables include, for example, language difficulties, cultural difficulties, drug complications, health issues and political issues. Some of these issues, like the political issue of how the big (and un-named) seafood companies interact with the divers and their assistants, could indeed be dangerous if the companies or captains felt the pilot program was going to impact their profits.

It is doubtful that the resources ECACL has to offer on this pilot would make an impression strongly enough to overcome the complicating variables present in Gracias a Dios

5. The number and nature of potential partners is greater in the Southern Cone.

There are only two or three legitimate NGOs in Gracias a Dios. In the Southern Cone there are more than 15, even though several of them are not likely candidates to become implementers.

Among those potential candidates to implement the pilot in the southern cone are CARE and Save the Children. Both have regional offices in Choluteca, which is immediately adjacent to Valle.



6. The Ministry of Labor is functional in the Southern Cone, but not in Gracias a Dios.

Not only is the Ministry of Labor (MOL) functional in the Southern Cone, the Sub-Commission for the Gradual Elimination of Child Labor is extremely organized and active in Valle. The Sub-Commission could easily promote education for child workers in the Southern Cone.

There is little presence of the MOL in Gracias a Dios.

It should be remembered that the MOL seems to be non-functional in terms of prosecuting abusive child labor cases. One conclusion of the report is that it would be useless to target increased enforcement by the MOL. The issue of government enforcement of laws has been tackled by many projects of many donors, and is therefore much too pervasive a problem to be a viable objective of a project the size of this pilot project.

7. Gracias a Dios has severe communication problems.

There are no roads into Gracias a Dios. Entry by boat is slow and costly. Entry by airplane is infrequent and possibly dangerous. Furthermore, although there are telephones in Puerto Palacios they frequently do not function. Problems of setting up and monitoring a pilot project in Gracias a Dios are beyond the ability of this project.

Conclusion: The pilot project should be located in the Southern Cone. Within the Southern Cone, it would be more advisable to conduct the pilot in the Department of Valle.

**What are the main problems of child workers in the selected area?**

Children's rights are rarely recognized in rural Honduras. This is because of ignorance of the rights and the lifestyle dictated by living in poverty. One of the most important rights that the children are deprived of is education.

Children living in southern Honduras rarely have the opportunity to continue with their education beyond 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Even fewer actually graduate from 9<sup>th</sup> grade and enter high school.

Both parents and children are products of their culture. Somehow that culture needs to be examined in order to look more closely at the factors that currently place work at a higher priority for children than education.

**Who are the potential partners?**

The Ministry of Labor and their Sub-Commission for the Gradual Elimination of Child Labor are important partners. Not only are they the official government representatives for child labor issues, they indeed are at the forefront of regulating child labor abuses, and theoretically have the authority to act against inappropriate situations. They have expressed an eagerness to learn more about the issues and become even more active. To date, the Sub-Commission seems to be the most active and useful anti-child labor entity in the country, and has a multi-year plan that in theory will conclude with the elimination of abusive child labor in Honduras.

The parents are an extremely important partner. They are easily accessible and willing to talk. They are also considered to be one of the stumbling blocks in eliminating abusive child labor. Naturally parents assert a great deal of influence over their children. That influence, to date, is not considered to be helpful to the anti-child labor movement. Changing parents' opinions about child labor, and thereby changing children's opinions about work and education, will be a challenge.

The Ministry of Education is interested in child labor issues. Fortunately they have also made it possible to offer education through non-traditional mechanisms to children in remote settings by encouraging those mechanisms and supporting them to some extent. They have also offered some scholarships to the children of the most impoverished families in the country, but this effort is not nearly large enough to be significant.

Honduras is fortunate to have three or four functional non-traditional educational programs. These programs all have slightly different objectives, geographical venues, sponsors, sustainability plans and pedagogical strategies. Nevertheless, the approaches share many qualities. It would be useful if the programs could somehow benefit from each other. Every attempt should be made to use the appropriate program in the appropriate geographical area.

There are two strong international NGOs functioning in and around the child labor issue in Honduras. They are CARE and Save the Children. SAVE actually has two offices, one for SAVE/USA and the other for SAVE/UK. SAVE/UK is the one more involved in child labor issues. Both CARE and SAVE have very competent staffs, proven financial management systems, and access to more technical assistance when necessary.

Honduras' private sector is a key partner in the anti-abusive child labor movement. They must be handled very carefully. Experience thus far has shown them to be responsive to reasonable suggestions. The problem is that what seems reasonable to a donor, a government or an NGO may be different than what seems reasonable to the private sector. The incentive for business is profit. That must be recognized and appreciated because free enterprise is one cornerstones of democratic government. The private sector must have a role in any successful anti-abusive child labor approach. To work against the private sector would make it difficult for the pilot project to be successful, and even more difficult for the pilot to become sustainable.

Thus far the donors are standing on the sideline. All donors make strategic plans several years in advance. It is sometimes possible to attach a new issue to part of an approved strategy. The InterAmerican Development Bank is currently conducting an integrated sector assessment of Gracias a Dios, but that has not yet developed into an action plan to combat abusive child labor with education.

The only active project is the ILO/IPEC project. They have conducted several rapid assessments, and are now working to launch at least two pilot projects, one in Santa Barbara and one in Choluteca. IPEC in Choluteca was very collaborative with ECACL during the rapid assessment, and should be consulted when before implementation of the pilot project.



**What would be appropriate interventions from the child labor aspect?**

This report is recommending interventions at three levels: Social marketing and/or community mobilization, provision of non-traditional education to working children, and promoting collaboration and coordination between institutions and programs.

These three interventions are related to each other. For instance, without the parental and community awareness of the impact of abusive child labor it will be impossible to convince them to send the children to school instead of work, or at least to encourage the children to further their education while working.

If there is no inter and intra-institutional coordination, the educational offerings will not be as effective as they could have been. Although each of the recommended programs is very successful, they each have something to learn from the other programs. Finally, inter-institutional bickering would present a severe challenge to pilot success.

**Potential Education Interventions**

Today, there are more than 800,000 Honduran youth who have not completed primary school, and just as many who have not attended secondary school. Approximately 100,000 of those youth are participating in one of two programs in order to overcome their educational deficiencies. Those two programs are EDUCATODOS and Maestro en Casa. EDUCATODOS roughly means “education for all”. Maestro en Casa means “teacher in the home”.

The methodology of the two programs is similar. They both emphasize the importance of flexibility, in response to the needs and schedules of persons who are probably working. They have developed curricula that include textbooks and recordings which are broadcast by radio or can be obtained on cassette. Both programs have staff with the responsibility of promoting, documenting, and assisting with the evaluation of the program. Instruction is facilitated by volunteers, who also assume the responsibility of tracking and evaluating the progress of their students. The participants study independently, and listen to the radio broadcasts in the late afternoon five days a week. They also meet during weekends to review their studies. Both programs have been recognized and certified by the Ministry of Education. Both programs have documented that more women have enrolled in their programs than men. Both programs have approached the private sector in search of support for their services in return for providing an education for company employees.

There are some differences between the two. EDUCATODOS has had much more financial support, especially from USAID. The EDUCATODOS students receive their textbooks free of charge, the Maestro en Casa students purchase their textbooks. EDUCATODOS has a physical presence in each of the MOE departmental offices. Maestro en Casa receives 12% of its funding from the MOE. The Maestro en Casa curriculum was developed for an older audience, while the EDUCATODOS curriculum, although possessing a primary school curriculum, is now focusing more on the development of their curriculum for grades 7, 8 and 9. The Maestro en Casa curriculum is more theoretical, but was developed in collaboration with the communities it serves. Also, the Maestro en Casa target is to accomplish two academic years during one

calendar year. The EDUCATODOS curriculum has five cross cutting themes (population, environment, health, national identity, and citizenship/democracy), and the subject areas include math, science and technology, social sciences, communications, community, culture and work. The curriculum is practical and relevant to the needs of Honduran youth.

Over 200,000 students have graduated from the EDUCATODOS primary level program; 60,000 have graduated from Maestro en Casa (IHER, El Maestro en Casa, undated). Program officials report that in 2002 there are 88,000 (EDUCATODOS 2001) students enrolled in EDUCATODOS and 22,000 enrolled in Maestro en Casa.

In Choluteca and Valle, both programs were cited by Ministry of Education officials, by private sector representatives, and by parents and youth. Both programs are known locally, and there is a sense of appreciation both for the quality of their services and for the fact that they are reaching out to an otherwise marginalized population. Ministry of Education officials recognize that they simply do not have sufficient resources to tackle all the educational problems and challenges in Honduras, and are consequently grateful that programs such as EDUCATODOS and Maestro en Casa are operational and offer a credible educational alternative.

One of the promising non-traditional methods, Sistema de Aprendizaje Tutorial (SAT), is provided through the Association for Indigenous Socio-economic Development (BANYAN), an NGO. SAT is not available in the southern cone. It is, however, a very important non-traditional approach on the northeastern coast. SAT is discussed here because it is possible that other programs could learn from SAT, and visa versa.

SAT is a secondary level program. It was developed thirty years ago, and based on its success in other countries, was introduced in Honduras six years ago. Its focus and real concern are rural communities, where the plight of the poor is getting worse. The program focuses on education and rural development, including themes such as attitudinal change, self-sustainability, heightened respect and value of local culture, critical thinking, teamwork, problem resolution and skills training. It includes a rigorous academic program as well as community service and a strong, practical agricultural production component. The curriculum integrates five basic subject areas: math, sciences, language and communication, agricultural technology, and service. The SAT program is not just a presence in the community: it is integrated into the community through a participatory methodology.

SAT students are organized in groups of 20-30. Each group is assigned a tutor whose salary is paid by the Ministry of Education. A critical part of SAT is the training sessions of the tutors, which last nine days straight every three months for six years. The students meet between 18-25 hours per week, roughly 4-5 hours a day. There are a total of 70 texts, and teach tutor is responsible for all the subjects at all six levels. There are presently 45 groups immersed in the SAT program, and the students represent about 90 communities. There are a total of roughly 1,000 students.



What is impressive about SAT is the comparison of its students' test scores with those of students of traditional high schools throughout the country. The Minister of Education was so impressed with the SAT results that he has requested BAYAN to expand into other regions of the country.

The limitations of SAT are the resources that BAYAN has to support the program and the number of students participating in SAT. Of the 1,000 students enrolled along the north coast, some are from Gracias a Dios and others are from Colón. This is a small percentage of the youth at the secondary level in Gracias a Dios.

## **VIII. PROVIDING EDUCATION TO CHILD WORKERS IN THE SOUTHERN CONE**

### **Where to conduct the pilot**

The conclusion of this report is that the pilot project should be conducted in Honduras' southern cone, specifically in the department of Valle.

Certain key considerations need to be observed in the planning and implementation of the pilot project, such as:

#### ***The Pilot Project Will be Overseen by BEPS' ECACL.***

BEPS' ECACL will fund and be ultimately responsible for the success of the pilot project initiative. ECACL will also be answerable, through BEPS, to USAID, especially to the Latin American and Caribbean Desk and the Honduran Mission. ECACL will provide additional support for the evaluation aspect of the project, both at mid-term and summative. ECACL will also provide additional technical assistance, when appropriate, and at the request of the implementation entity. The implementing entity will be obligated to provide reports, specified by contract, to ECACL.

#### ***The Pilot Project Will be Implemented by an NGO in Honduras.***

There are two viable NGO's in Honduras to carry out the implementation of this pilot project: CARE and SAVE/UK. This report recommends that CARE be selected for one reason. Using CARE as the implementing entity will eliminate any complications that may arise from the failure to compete the project on the open market. CARE, as a partner of the BEPS project, could simply be assigned the responsibility and budget to carry out the activity.

Choosing one of the BEPS partners raises the question, why CARE and not GroundWork or George Washington University? The answer to that question rests in the fact that none of those BEPS partners have a physical presence in Honduras.

***Part of the Pilot Launch Could Include a Regional Child Labor Conference.***

A regional child labor conference will be an event associated with the launch of the pilot project. The expenses for the conference will be borne by ECACL. CARE will take an active role in the planning and execution of the conference.

The purpose of the conference will be to raise the consciousness of public and private sector institutions about the issue of education to combat abusive child labor. A detailed illustrative list of issues and potential participants can be found in Appendix E. The conference will be planned in such a way as to both attract attention to the launch of the pilot and attract attention to the role of education to combat child labor in the region of Central America.

***The Length of the Pilot Project***

The pilot project will be approximately one year long.

**What should be the elements of the pilot project?**

Awareness of the issue of abusive child labor and how to combat it is a key tool in defeating abusive child labor. This report reveals that the single most influential audience in propagating or defeating child labor is the parents of the children. Therefore, the awareness campaign will target the parents and community.

This awareness campaign will be implemented using a strategy of social marketing and/or community mobilization, whichever is determined to have the greatest likelihood of success.

A second required element of the pilot is the provision of basic education to working children, especially those involved in abusive child labor. This element will be accomplished by promoting and planning with one or more of the existing non-traditional strategies that are already recognized by the Ministry of Education. The strategy to be used will be chosen by ECACL, the Ministry of Education and the implementing entity. USAID will be invited to participate in the meeting. To the extent necessary, the methodology and outreach of the chosen educational plan will be strengthened as required by the pilot project.

The third project element is coordination. Just as examples, coordination between these entities would strengthen the campaign against child labor:

- The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labor;
- The Valle Departmental Office of Education and the MOL sub-commission for the elimination of child labor;
- The long-range plan of the MOE with the sustainability plan of the pilot project;
- The three educational strategies: SAT, EDUCATODOS and Maestro en Casa. The final approach in Valle should contain the best elements of all three approaches;
- Mayors, churches and schools, in order to use their platform for the awareness programs;



- Media outlets with the awareness component of the pilot;
- The multi year plan of the Commission to eliminate child labor with NGOs and interested community and business entities;
- Donors should assure that child labor is somewhere on their agenda and that they are coordinating their efforts in that area with other donors and government bodies;
- Private sector companies to assure that major zones of working children have some opportunity to access educational opportunities.

It would be easy to suggest that the project address issues related with enforcement of child labor law. However, this report recommends that enforcement not be addressed directly by the project. Government enforcement entities such as MOL inspectors, Public Ministry prosecutors and policemen should be invited to conferences to raise their awareness, but no direct project module should attempt to strengthen their enforcement behavior.

### **What partners should we work with?**

USAID is a key partner. However, USAID/Honduras has an education RP that addresses vocational education, and non-traditional education through EDUCATODOS. While both of these topics are related to child labor, the Mission does not have a child labor niche per se.

Project management should be respectful to not impose on the USAID Mission in Honduras. The ECACL pilot project is sponsored by the Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade/Education. The USAID/Honduras mission has agreed to let the project be carried out in Honduras. However, project personnel within the USAID Mission have a full agenda of activities without extending themselves to the ECACL pilot project. Nevertheless, the USAID Mission should be informed of any project issues or planned events, and their voluntary participation will be welcome.

Honduran government support is absolutely necessary in order to operate within Honduras. Lack of government support will assure the failure of any effort in sustainability. In the final assessment, the only important actors in this pilot are Hondurans. Therefore, government, as the representative of the people must be carefully integrated into the pilot project.

Parental and community support is absolutely necessary for project success. Every effort will be expended to incorporate the participation of parents, families and communities. For this purpose there will be an awareness program, but also contact should be made with local government, schools, churches, businesses and workers groups.

Without the private sector there would be very little child labor. Therefore, the private sector is very important in the fight against abusive child labor. Every effort should be made to incorporate the private sector into the project team.

Although one NGO will lead the project within the country, the cooperation of other NGOs, donors and international bodies will be extremely useful. ECACL's initial visit to Honduras found many public entities and NGO to be very interested and knowledgeable about future efforts to combat child labor.

## **Results of the Intervention**

### ***Proposed Objective***

The proposed objective of the pilot project is to use education to combat abusive child labor. There are three strategies proposed to accomplish that goal: social marketing and/or community mobilization to raise awareness; providing non-traditional education to working children; and fostering cooperation and collaboration between entities interested in child labor. By using those strategies it is expected that the results of the pilot project will be more education participation on the part of children in abusive work situations in the department of Valle.

### ***Evaluation Mechanism***

It will be necessary to measure that increase of educational participation by children and youth in Valle. Therefore, certain indicators will be established to measure the difference between baseline, mid-project and final project achievement. There needs to be at least one verifiable indicator that can be measured easily at these predetermined project milestones.

This and other indicators will be established during the design phase of the project with the assistance of an evaluation specialist. Illustrative examples of indicators are:

- The number of functional, non-traditional education sites established during the duration of the project;
- The percentage of eligible children and youth enrolled in educational programs, traditional and non-traditional, from a (or several) municipality;
- The percentage of children and youth graduating from 7<sup>th</sup> grade from selected municipalities.

After establishing the indicators it will be necessary to establish the project's mid-term and final targets. Baselines and targets will be specified in the project design document and agreed upon by ECACL and the implementing NGO.

Other indicators will be established to evaluate the effectiveness of the specific strategies. For example, how much did the awareness program through social marketing and community mobilization impact on the final result of student participation. The same question could be asked of how effectively the project has promoted collaboration.



### Calendar

August/Sept. August	ECACL approval of Planning Document. ECACL names evaluation specialist to participate on planning team.
September	Project design document completed by NGO and ECACL.
September	NGO gearing up for project implementation.
January 2003	Completion of first ½ of project. Mid-term evaluation.
September 2003	Complete second ½ of project. Start final evaluation.
October 2003	Complete and submit: 1) final evaluation and 2) final project report.

### ***Design Document and Illustrative Budget***

The implementing NGO and ECACL will draft the design document collaboratively, although ECACL must approve the final project. At that point the document will no longer be a draft.

The illustrative budget will be drafted by the collaborating NGO, but within the following guidelines. The final budget submission must be approved by ECACL.

- The budget must not exceed \$110,000;
- No more than 40% of the budget for salaries;
- No more than 10% of the budget for indirect expenses and administrative costs;
- No less than 50% of the budget for ODCs.



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## **APPENDIX 1. LIST OF INDIVIDUALS AND INSTITUTIONS CONTACTED**

### **AMHBLI**

Flaviano Martinez, Tegucigalpa  
Arquimides Garcia, Puerto Lempira)

### **AMERICAN EMBASSY**

Paul Trivelli, DCM  
Susan Fleck, Labor Attaché  
Rosa Suarez, Commercial Section

### **ANDAR**

Santa Elizabeth Meléndez, Director

### **BAYAN**

Soheil Dooki, La Ceiba  
Ricardo Eden, Palacios

### **BID** Banco para el Desarrollo Interamericano

Lesley O'Connell, Tegucigalpa

### **CADERH** (Centro Asesor para el Desarrollo de los Recursos Humanos de Honduras)

Martha Ivonne Romero, Executive Director  
Mauricio Raudales, Technical Coordinator  
Lourdes Maradiaga, Training Development Coordinator  
Noel Girón, Director INFOTEC, San Marcos de Colon, Choluteca

### **CARE**

Barbara Jackson, Country Director  
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Jose Acevedo, Tegucigalpa  
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Lenar Amador, Choluteca  
Karolina Escalante, Choluteca  
Xiomara Montalvan, Choluteca  
Carlos Salgado, Choluteca  
Carola Rivas, Choluteca

### **CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (Choluteca/Valle)**

Victor Argeñal, President, FEPROCAH  
Celio Emilio Arias, Chamber of Commerce, Choluteca  
Fredy Arias, Sugar Company La Grecia  
Emilio Baires, Cable TV, Choluteca  
Martha Canales, ANDAH  
Arnon Faroud, SURAGROH

Lourdes Guevara, Chamber of Commerce, Choluteca  
Omar Guillen, Governor of Choluteca  
David Hernández, SEAGRO  
Peter Jacobsen, Owner/Manager, Grupo DELI (shrimp)  
Noris Corrales, Human Resources, Grupo DELI  
Henry Espinoza, Human Resources, Grupo DELI  
Rigoberto Jerezano, Azucarera Choluteca  
Roger Mondragón, V.P. Chamber of Commerce, Choluteca  
Hector Motiño, Human Resources Director, Grupo Granjas Marinas  
Nelson Paz, Chamber of Commerce (Choluteca)  
Gustavo Ponce, Chamber of Commerce, Choluteca  
Joaquin Romero, Grupo Granjas Marinas  
Jimmy Zúñiga, Refinadora de Sal

### **CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

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Jefferin Funez	David Hernandez
Pedro Lopez	Oscar Montoya
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Kevin Ortez	Ronal Ortez
Braulio Ortiz	Edas Perez
Oscar Perez	Luis Pulido
Jose Rodríguez	Nelson Rodriguez
Cesar Sanchez	Denis Viera
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Merlin Zuazo	Victor Zuazo

### **COHEP**

Gustavo Aguilar, Executive Director (COHEP)  
Sonia Palomo, General Secretary (COHEP)  
Armando Urtecho, Legal Advisor (COHEP)  
Cintia Molina, AGROLIBANO, (Melon, Watermelon and Horticultural)  
Manuel Perez, Ecsosur, (Melon Producer)  
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Marcela Suazo, Tegucigalpa

## **INFOP (Instituto Nacional de Formación Profesional)**

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Paulino Isidoro, Coordinator IPEC-OIT, Honduras  
Mayela Abudoj, Technical Assistant  
Martha Chavez, Choluteca Project Manager

## **MAESTRO EN CASA**

Javier Díaz, Director of Services  
María Cristina Salinas, Publicity and Marketing  
Mercedez Duarte, Educational Coordination

## **INAM**

Marcela Suazo, Tegucigalpa

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**

Mercedes Sofia Hernandez, Vice Minister for Coordination  
Maria Elena Quan, External Cooperation  
Claudia Oviedo, Department Director, Choluteca  
Edras Mejía, Department Director, Valle

**Ministry of Health**

Luis Alonso Everett, Palacios

**MINISTRY OF LABOR**

Martha Rosibel Garay, Director of Previsión Social  
Maria Dolores Meléndez, Assistant to the Director  
Jose Alberto Rodriguez, Choluteca

**MOPAWI**

Oswaldo Munguia, Tegucigalpa  
Efraín Thompson, Puerto Lempira

**MUNICIPALITY MARCOVIA**

Felipe Ordóñez, Mayor  
Jose Adalid Cruz, Police Chief  
Mariano Herrera, Comisionado

**MUNICIPALITY SAN LORENZO**

Mauricio Alvarado, Mayor  
Yessenia Guillén, Protección de la Infancia  
Osbania Umanzor, Defensora Municipal de la Niñez

**PARENTS**

José Alvarez	Samuel Alvarez
Rosa Alvarez	Elida Cruz
Candida Cruz	Francisco Diaz
Otilia Cruz	Maria Flores
Maria Flores	Ana Funez
Santos Flores	Delmys Gomez
Maria Funes	Karla Lagos
Eleisa Lagos	Maria Murillo
Rosa Maldonado	Pedro Ortez
Eligio Nuñez	Santos Pavon
Braulio Ortiz	Maria Quiroz
Jose Perez	Maria Valdez
Juana Rodríguez	Maria Villatoro
Jose Viera	

**PRAF**

José Ramón Martinez



**PUBLIC MINISTRY**

Mario Alberto, Fiscal  
Ela Paredes, Fiscalía Especial de la Niñez

**UNICEF**

Marta Obando, Children's Rights Coordinator

**USAID/HONDURAS**

Joe Lombardo, DMD  
Chris Cushing, SPS  
John Helwig, HRD/ET  
Diane Leach, HRD/ET  
Marco Tulio Mejía, HRD/ET  
John Rogosch, HRD  
Dennis Sharma, ANRO





## **APPENDIX 2. ITINERARIES**

### **Valle and Choluteca**

#### ***April 3, 2002***

Arrive from Washington

#### **April 4, 2002**

AM Courtesy Call – CARE  
US Embassy/Labor Attaché

#### **April 5, 2002**

EDUCOTODOs Meeting  
IPEC Meeting.  
Entry Briefing at USAID.  
Follow up telephone conversation with EDUCATODOS

#### **April 6, 2002**

Planning day  
7:00 PM. Send final action plan proposal to ECACL via e-mail.

#### **April 7, 2002**

R&R

#### **April 8, 2002**

Discussions at USAID.  
Meeting at Ministry of Education.  
Meet UNICEF  
Meet with Ministry of Labor.  
Meet CARE

#### **April 9, 2002**

Office work.  
Meet INFOP  
Meet FEDEMA  
Sent report outline to USAID/Honduras via e-mail for feedback.

#### **April 10, 2002**

Meeting at COHEP (Consejo Hondureño de la Empresa Privada)  
Meet at INE  
Meet at CADERH  
Meet Maestros en Casa,  
Follow up telephone conversation with Maestro en la Casa  
Pick up introductory letters from the Ministry of Education



**April 11, 2000**

Meet Fiscalia, in the Ministerio Público  
Drive to Choluteca

**April 12, 2002**

Office Work  
Meet CARE/Choluteca  
Attend EDUCATODOS promoters meeting  
Meet IPEC/Choluteca  
Observe EDUCATODOS in action.

**April 13, 2002**

Office Work  
Meet Mayor of San Lorenzo.  
Field Visit to migrant workers camp  
Conduct Focus Groups in San Lorenzo: children  
Conduct Focus Groups in San Lorenzo: adults

**April 14, 2002**

Office time  
Field trip to San Marcos vocational education facility.

**April 15, 2002**

Meet Granjas Marinas  
Meet National Coordinator of Socio-Environmental Concerns  
Meet representative of the Chamber of Commerce

**April 16, 2002**

Field visit to Santa Rosa Melon farm  
Meeting w/Min of Labor inspector and representatives of the child labor sub-commission  
Meet Choluteca Director of Education  
Meet with Statistics Office at departmental education office.

**April 17, 2002**

Meeting w/Mayor of Marcovia and Defensor de Niñez.  
Field visit to melon and chili farm  
Observe Shrimp Farm delivery of Bonos de Educación  
P/u statistics at Dept. of Education  
TV interview  
Meeting with Chamber of Commerce at Fuente Hotel.  
Newspaper interview

**April 18, 2002**

Field visit to salt packing plant.  
Meet EDUCATODOS promotor  
Meet Director Departamental of education.

Field visit to Salt Flats  
Field visit to Manager of a Salt Company  
Pick up data from Departmental Statistics office in Valle.  
Drive to Tegucigalpa  
Prepare power point presentation for tomorrow.

**April 19, 2002**

Conduct Stakeholders Meeting at Camino Real.  
Office Work  
Meet ex-CAPS scholar and national teacher of the year (twice); former Dep. Dir. of EDUCATODOS

**April 20, 2002**

Report Drafting

**April 21, 2002**

Report Drafting

**April 22, 2002**

Report Drafting  
Embassy briefing  
Exit briefing with USAID

**April 23, 2002**

Return to Washington

**Itinerary #2,**

***The Mosquitia***

**May 23, 2002**

Review of SOW, preparations, contract.

**May 24, 2002**

Meeting with MOPAWI  
Meeting with American Embassy  
Meeting with IPIEC

**May 27, 2002**

Made travel arrangements  
Meeting with Ministry of Labor  
Telephone conversations with:  
    CONADEH  
    Merchant Marines  
    BAYAN in La Ceiba



**May 28, 2002**

Meeting with CONADEH.  
Depart for Puerto Lempira.  
Met with MAPOWI  
Met with Ministry of Education  
Met with two teenagers  
Met with two boat captains  
Met with two missionaries

**May 29, 2002**

Met with HS principal, one teacher.  
Met with one class of students.  
Departed for Palacios  
Met with BAYAN  
Met with group of diver assistants and divers.

**May 30, 2002**

Departed for La Ceiba  
Met with BAYAN, about SAT  
Departed for Tegus  
Arranged next day's luncheon meeting

**May 31, 2002**

Preparation for meeting  
Held debriefing meeting with 11 individuals, representing ministries and NGOs.  
Met with BID

**June 4/5, 2002**

Office and writing time.  
Telephone conversations:  
    MOE  
    USAID  
    INAM  
Circulated drafts of the report.



### APPENDIX 3. MATRIX OF WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Source: Del Cid 2001

WFCL	Characteristics	Geographical location and Statistics	Legal regulation
Some forms of domestic service	Mostly girls not paid in cash. It includes all type of domestic tasks: care have younger and others siblings, cook, clean-up, washing. Children work many hours and long schedules. They are in risk of physical and sexual abuse by patrons or their sons. It is an exhausting and degrading job. They are also isolated from their own family and society.	Entire country. It is observed in the urban areas, especially in principal cities such as Tegucigalpa and Comyuela, San Pedro Sula, Choluteca, El Progreso, Ceiba, Tela, Puerto Cortes, La Lima, Juticalpa, Catacamas, Santa Rosa, Santa Barbara and Danli. In 1998, 25,710 adolescents were domestics (1,138 boys and 24,572 girls). Four percent of employers prefer to hire children between 10 & 13 years old. The rest 96% between 14 & 17. Ninety five percent (140.000) of the total children (boys, girls and adolescents) working as domestics do not attend to school.	This form of child labor is forbidden in Article 122; Article 134 part d), b) and a) of the Code for the Child and Adolescent. Regulated in the 182 ILO Agreement, Article 3.
Prostitution (Child prostitution, procuring children for prostitution purposes and child pornography)	Children are subject to various sexual commercial activities. They face different dangers such as work under force, exposure to physical violence and sexual abuse, and psychic traumas. They are prone to get sexual diseases. Usually initiated between 9-11 years.	Big cities (Tegucigalpa, Comayagua, La Ceiba, Choluteca, Juticalpa, San Pedro Sula, Danli. According to Casa Alianza (Alliance House) there are numerous girls in prostitution in the borders with Guatemala.	Forbidden in Article 122 of the Code for the Child and Adolescent (CCA) and in Article 3 of the 182 ILO Agreement.

WFCL	Characteristics	Geographical location and Statistics	Legal regulation
Boys and Girls in drug trafficking	Some children make illegal transactions for their families. They are exposed to physical violence and even death by drug dealers; violation rather than protection by the police; and sexual abuse, violations, and unethical and immoral behavior.	Olancho, where the major number of children in this activity are identified, Comayagua, Tegucigalpa, San Pedro Sula, Ceiba, Yoro, Colon y Santa Rosa de Copan. According to the Anti-drug National Directorate in one of every three law-enforcement operations they conduct, there is a child involved. In 1997, 134 children were captured in drug trafficking. During January and February of 1998, police arrested 12 teenagers between ages 12-17.	Forbidden in Articles 122 (code b) and Article 134 (sections c and ch) of the Code for the Child and Adolescent and in Article 3 (clause c) of the 182 ILO Agreement
Boys and Girls in the fabrication and sale of pyrotechnic material	Long hours of work, risk of explosions, of getting burned, dying, dermatological and eye illnesses.	Santa Rosa de Copan at the production level. Sales mostly take place in principal cities.	Forbidden or regulated in Article 122 (clauses b and j) of the Code for the Child and Adolescent and Article 3 (clause d) of the 182 ILO Agreement
Trash scavengers	Collection of materials for recycling or sale. Exposures to burns, dangerous substances and toxics from hospitals, inhalation of gases, eat damaged food, crashes by dump trucks, and violence of drunken persons. Children compete with adults and animals in collecting food.	Tegucigalpa, San Pedro Sula, La Ceiba, El Progreso, Choluteca, Puerto Cortes, Tela, La Entrada Copan. The proportion adult to children in this activity is 1 to 9.	Forbidden in Article 122 of the Code for the Child and Adolescent (clauses b ,i, u and s) and in Article 3 (clause d) of the 182 ILO Agreement

WFCL	Characteristics	Geographical location and Statistics	Legal regulation
Working with or exposed to chemical toxic products for agriculture	The greater number of children in worst forms of labor is in the agricultural sector (traditional of subsistence and agro-exporter). Some studies conclude that the sector is very dangerous because of pesticides forms. Use of poisonous substances as insecticides, pesticides and fertilizers in agro-exporter companies and in agro-industry in the case of melon, coffee, sugar cane, basic grains, roots and bananas. These practices are very detrimental to the health and growing process. Children irrigate the plants without any protective measurement and weather is inclement.	Rural areas, more specifically in the departments of Choluteca, Olancho, Santa Barbara, Atlantida, Copan, Comayagua, Francisco Morazan, El Paraiso. 48.03% of total working children are in agriculture. According to Casa Alianza, in July 2000 more than 350 adolescents were working in melon plantations and shrimp farms in the South. In addition, a considerable number of children are involved in cutting coffee in Ocotepeque.	Regulated in Article 122 (clauses b, j, l, t ) of the Code of the Child and Adolescent and in Article 3 (clause d) of the 182 ILO Agreement.
Children working in bars, billiards, night clubs	Children are used for naked exhibits, to sell alcoholic beverages. Exposed to the dangers and consequences of commercial sexual exploitation, drug consumption, violence, physical and sexual abuse, humiliations and value distortion.	San Pedro Sula, Puerto Cortes, Ceiba, Tela, El Progreso, Tegucigalpa, Comayagua and Choluteca.	Forbidden in Article 123 (clause c), Article 125 (clause c) and Article 134 of the Code of the Child and Adolescent and in Article 3 of the 182 ILO Agreement.
Working in sawmills with dangerous machines and instruments	Usually children are used as helpers. They are in direct contact with dangerous machines and instruments. Risks of injury, death. They labor without any protection, minimum training and do not have social security in case of emergency. Besides, they receive low payment; endure high temperatures, strident sounds, excessive dust, and violence and authoritarian patrons.	Olancho, La Ceiba, El Paraiso, and in general in all the country	Regulated in Article 122 (clauses b, e, g, j, n, o, s, u) And Article 134 (clause a) of the Code of Child and Adolescent

WFCL	Characteristics	Geographical location and Statistics	Legal regulation
Working in carpentry with dangerous machines and instruments	Children are usually helpers or responsible for tasks such as cleaning sawdust or residues, use of sandpaper, knife-grinders, wood cutters with electric machines and polishing with paints and enamel. Children interested in learning the occupation are not paid. They submit to a self-training process without adequate precautions. Some risk is arm injuries, lost of fingers, intoxication, and long-hours including night and weekends. In addition, patrons and adults mistreat them.	Urban and sub-urban areas.	Regulated in Article 122 (clauses b, e, g, ll, j, n, o, s,) and in Article 134 (clause a) of the Code of Childhood and Adolescent
Mining, earth removal	Children do subterranean labor in areas inaccessible to adults. Exposed to contaminants, extensive hours of labor, very low wages, to death.	Santa Barbara, Cortes, Olancho, El Paraiso y Choluteca. 30% of children and adolescents (1,475)	Forbidden and/or regulated in Article 122 (clauses b, ch, d, j, ll, n, q, r), Article 134 (clause a) of the Code of Child and Adolescent and Article 3 of the 182 ILO Agreement.
Limestone	Children load and unload large amount of wood and sand for lime, light up and keep the fire in the ovens and remove lime in the ovens. They are exposed to high temperatures. High risk of burning, inhalation of toxic dust, risk of being smashed in loading and unloading the wood, eye problems due to high temperatures, long schedules.	West and central areas of the country	Forbidden and/or regulated in the Article 122 (clauses b, ch, d, j, k, n, r, s, u), Article 134 (clause e) of the Code of the Child and Adolescent and Article 3 (clause d) of the 182 ILO Agreement.
'Cayuqueros'/ Work in dug-out canoes and as diver-apprentices	'Cayuqueros' fish lobsters, shrimps, shellfish and seafood in general. In both activities they wake-up at 4 am, are exposed to the sun and in a highly competitive environment.	Atlantic littoral, Gracias A Dios, La Mosquitia. There is no information available for 'cayuqueros' or diver children. There are 9,000 active divers. 83.5% started diving between 15-25 years old, 6.5% before 15 years old and 10% after age 25	Regulated in Article 122 (clauses a, h, u), Article 134 (clause a) of the Code of Child and Adolescent, and Article 3 (clause d) of the 182 ILO Agreement.

<b>WFCL</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Geographical location and Statistics</b>	<b>Legal regulation</b>
Street vendors	They sell merchandise, shoeshines, 'tortillas', and newspapers. Subject to labor exploitation, physical violence, physical damage due to carry heavy weights, victims of robbery, low self-esteem.	West, Atlantic Littoral, Choluteca and Central Region. It is an exclusive urban problem. Tegucigalpa, San Pedro Sula, Progreso, Ceiba, Tela, Comayagua, Choluteca and others	Regulated in Article 122 (clauses c, ch, I, n, r, s, u), Article 134 (clause a), Article 135 of the Code of the Child and the Adolescent and numeral 3 (clauses d and e) of the 190 ILO Recommendation, Part II.
Sellers in roads	Children sell fruits, fast food, newspapers, auto spares and sweets in the roads connecting the principal cities of the country. Risk from traffic, insolation, respiratory and broncho lung illnesses. They are also exposed to violence and adult mistreatment due to competition on sales.	Main roads across the country	Regulated in Article 122 (clauses c, ch, n, r, s, u), Article 122, Article 134 (clause a), Article 135 of the Code of the Child and the Adolescent, and Numeral 3 (clauses d, e) Part II or the 190 ILO Recommendation
Working in construction	Risk of numerous accidents, long schedules and cannot attend school	San Pedro Sula, Tegucigalpa, Comayagua, La Ceiba, Tela, Progreso. Only 3.89% of working children and adolescents are in this sector. Honduras has a high accident rate in construction for children between age 15-19	Regulated in Article 122 (clauses a, c, ch, d, e, g, ll, n, o, q, r, s, u) of the Code of the Child and the Adolescent, and Numeral 3 (clauses b, c, d, e) Part II or the 190 ILO Recommendation
Mechanics	Exposure to bruises, toxic paintings and oils, electric discharges, eye damage for soldering. Because they have to work long-hours, children do not attend school.	West, Atlantic Littoral, Choluteca, Olancho, Central Region. Tegucigalpa, San Pedro Sula	Regulated in Article 122 (clauses b, c, f, g, j, i, ll, m, n, o, p, q, s) of the Code of the Child and the Adolescent, Numeral 3 (clauses b, c, d, e) Part II or the 190 ILO Recommendation and Article 3 (clause d) of the ILO Convention 182
Shoemaking	Children cut leather and fabrics, assemble and glue different pieces with machines and manually. They are exposed to cuts, inhalation of toxins. They start as apprentices without payment and when they earn some cash, it is a symbolic amount.	All over the country. Mostly in urban areas.	Regulated in Article 122 (clauses a, b, j, ll, o) of the Code of the Child and the Adolescent, and Article 3 (clause d) of ILO Convention 182

<b>WFCL</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Geographical location and Statistics</b>	<b>Legal regulation</b>
'Maquilas'/Assembly plants	Children work long-hours, exposed to chemical products and dangerous instruments and machines. It is a very poor work environment: without adequate sanitation, precaution against fire or security measurements. They suffer physically and emotionally and they can lose parts of their bodies.	North and Central Regions	Regulated in Article 122 (clauses a, ch, f, g, j, ll, n, s) of the Code of the Child and the Adolescent, and Article 3 (clause d) of ILO Convention 182
Money collectors in buses	They collect money from users. Usually these children wash the vehicles. Children fall from the automotive units. Drivers, patrons and passengers abuse them. They work since 5 am to 8 pm, being unable to attend school	All over the country. North and Central regions	Regulated in Article 122 (clauses c, e, n, s, u) of the Code of the Child and the Adolescent, and Article 3 (clause d) of ILO Convention 182
Weeding with 'machete'	They are exposed to injuries and loss of body parts, sunburns and many dangers on the street.	Urban areas	Regulated in Article 122 (clauses a, r, u) of the Code of the Child and the Adolescent, and Article 3 (clause d) of ILO Convention 182
Rudimentary Agriculture	Children participate along all the productive cycle. Exposed to animal bites, physical deformities, respiratory and broncho lung illnesses. Exploited by patrons and families.	West, Atlantic Littoral, Olancho. Rural areas: South Zone and Central.	Regulated in Article 122 (clauses a, i, n, r, t, u) of the Code of the Child and the Adolescent, and Article 3 (clause d) of ILO Convention 182
Cattle raising	They milk the cows. Responsible for faring repairing and cleaning of stables. They risk animal attacks.	Atlantic Littoral, West and Olancho. In lower scale in Choluteca and Yoro	Regulated in Article 122 (clauses i, n, r, t, u) of the Code of the Child and the Adolescent, and Article 3 (clause d) of ILO Convention 182

## APPENDIX 4. ACTIVE NGOS

### *Southern Honduras*

APREMAT has the same beneficiaries as COBRESA. It promotes an interactive radio approach to learning mathematics in San Lorenzo.

CADERH is a vocational education NGO. More information in Chapter V.

CARE was founded in 1948 as a civil response to the need to assist Europe in its post-war recovery. It now has offices in 65 countries that emphasize disaster response, food security, HIV/AIDS prevention and education. CARE/Honduras employs 320 people executing its projects, and has four offices around the country, including one in Choluteca. The project in Choluteca is a loan project for micro businesses in the Mitch effected areas.

Christian Development Commission promotes development, especially for children. Its influence is in the Valle municipalities of Nacaome and San Francisco de Coray.

COBRESA, a private group located only in San Lorenzo, distributes notebooks to 1,600 students in 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade in San Lorenzo. Works in coordination with APREMAT.

IPEC has planned to execute a \$700,000, integrated, education/health program for 1,120 children and 250 families working in the melon plantations around Marcovia, Choluteca<sup>8</sup>. In order to do this, they executed a detailed study in 2001 that is not available for publication. Nevertheless, they have moved forward by contracting two NGOs to manage the project, employed a Project Manager, and rented an office in Choluteca.

The government has signed an agreement with the ILO, which is IPEC's sponsor, recognizing it as the authority on topics relating to child labor. The ILO logo is prominently displayed on the national child labor action plan.

JICA is the Japanese aid agency. They have a Japanese volunteer who provides technical assistance and training to teachers in the 1 through 3<sup>rd</sup> grades in six schools. Beneficiaries: 914 students.

Maestro en Casa is an interactive radio/cassette education project that currently serves 22,000 children in Honduras, and is recognized by the Ministry of Education.

Programa de Asignación Familiar (PRAF) is a small Honduran NGO that provides scholastic stipends (Lps. 500) to 7,789 children in 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> grade, and a bag of school materials (only 1<sup>st</sup> grade) to children in 1<sup>st</sup> grade in the Department of Valle. The purpose of the program is to reduce school desertion rates.

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<sup>8</sup> See the undated pamphlet publisher by IPEC, Action Programs.







## **APPENDIX 5. PROPOSED CENTRAL AMERICAN CONFERENCE**

### **Why**

The Task Order for Education to Combat Abusive Child Labor (ECACL) under the BEPS Task Order requires the ECACL team to organize and present one conference in each of USAID's geographical regions. The topics of the conferences are dependent on the needs of USAID and the regions.

One conference is scheduled to be held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from September 29<sup>th</sup> until October 4, 2002.

The idea behind this proposal is that due to BEPS activities and contacts in Central America and nascent activities by other entities, ECACL could serve the purpose of helping to coalesce current efforts in the region by planning and conducting a seminar on a single topic of mutual interest. As such, ECACL could take advantage of recent activity in the region by BEPS and other USAID activities that have established BEPS as a leading promoter of constructive research and ideas, to consolidate the BEPS position of leadership.

### **When**

The strategy for development of the remaining conferences has been to use them as showcases for the findings after required pilot projects. That strategy delays the conferences until near the end of the BEPS project. This paper is proposing that at least in the case of LAC that strategy be changed to include a conference in the near future.

During the last six months ECACL has collected numerous studies about child labor and education in Central America. Through those studies and during recent trips to the region it has become apparent that there is much more activity in child labor/education poised for implementation in the region than seems to be the case on the surface.

The idea is to strike while the iron is hot. Six weeks of planning would be necessary from the idea the idea was approved. Therefore, if this concept paper is approved by ECACL, BEPS and USAID by June 28, 2002, the conference could be held the week of the 12<sup>th</sup> of August, 2002.

### **Where**

A conference should be planned for a location that is convenient and economical for all potential attendees. Central America serves that purpose well, as it is located between Mexico to the North and South America to the South.

Within Central America, BEPS has been involved in two countries more than others: Honduras and El Salvador. Due to the fact that CETT is centering its Central American activities in Honduras and ECACL just conducted an assessment and follow-on assessment in Honduras, there is a lot of awareness of USAID, BEPS and ECACL in there. Also, Honduras' USAID Mission and Embassy personnel have been very supportive of BEPS activities. By planning the conference for Honduras, BEPS and ECACL would be able to take advantage of the positive presence it has established in the recent past.

## Who

From the ECACL point of view, it would like to have a broad representation at the conference. One overriding consideration is always finances. Honduras is as centrally located as any other Central American country, but some thought needs to be given to how to get the most important attendees to the conference. Following is a list and notes of who the attendees might be.

- Labor Attachés
- USAID reps (could be from D&G, education or economic development); could finance own travel.
- USAID regional project out of Guatemala; could finance own travel.
- Education Ministry representatives; they will expect funding for travel.
- Labor Ministry representatives; they will expect funding for travel.
- Government representatives who promote vocational education, training and attending the needs of marginalized or at-risk children; they will expect funding for travel.
- Multilateral donor representatives; could finance own travel.
  - IDB
  - World Bank
  - Org. of Iberian States (OIE)
- Bilateral donor representatives
  - Japan
  - Germany
  - Spain
  - Other
- ILO/IPEC
- UNICEF
- Union representatives; e.g. Solidarity Center; should support own travel.
- CETT (Centers of Excellence for Teacher Training); representatives are already in Honduras at the UNP (National Teachers College).
- PREAL; Office already in Honduras.
- FUPADEM; located in Costa Rica; should support own funding.
- Casa Alianza; Office in Honduras.
- NGOs, national, regional and international (SAVE, CARE, FLACSO)
- Working children representatives; would require funding if from other countries.

## Purpose

The general purpose of the conference would be to increase awareness or knowledge (or both) of important concepts that are jointly related to child labor, education and Latin America. One idea that has been put forth is the idea of targeting education as a strategy to combat abusive child labor. This idea is well received since it allows planners to focus on an element that is common to all country situations. It also allows planners to avoid the error of having a focus that is too broad. A single conference cannot be all things to all people. Targeting one single, mutually important, viable topic as a means to combat child labor should be well received.



Some of the sub-topics within education as a strategy to combat child labor are the following:

- Promoting awareness for parents about the importance of educating the next generation;
- How poverty promotes child labor;
- The role of vocational education;
- Educational relevancy;
- Scholarship incentives;
- Food incentives in the school;
- Outsourcing education to rural and agricultural zones;
- The theory of occupational choice;
- The school-work linkage;
- Do more working adults promote less child labor?
- The role of unions in promoting education?

### **Partners**

Certain entities have a vested interest in the topic of child labor and/or education. These entities could be recruited to participate in conference presentations or panels. A few illustrative examples of these entities who might be co-opted and their potential participation are:

- The Solidarity Center has done a lot of work with unions in Latin America. They have Spanish-speaking specialists and are interested in the topic of child labor. They could lead the union aspect of this, and at least convene a panel to discuss child labor vis-à-vis education through the eyes of union representatives.
- The IDB is planning a project in at least one Central American country. They could be invited to participate.
- The ILO/IPEC Latin American office is in Cost Rica. Given a participative role, I am certain they would participate.
- PREAL has a new strategy of providing public report cards on the quality and quantity of public education offered in each of the Central American countries. They could be asked to relate quality of education--especially relevancy, to issues that contribute to child labor.
- EDUCATODOS could present (thereby making USAID very happy) strategies for providing education to rural and remote areas.
- The Honduran Ministry of Education could discuss their strategy of outsourcing the provision of education to rural and remote areas.
- UNICEF could discuss their latest data on education and child labor, and if they don't have those exact data, they could discuss other information they have about the poverty/education/child labor linkages.
- CETT could talk some more about the relevancy issue and what that means for teacher training, and in turn for child labor.

**Parameters of the Conference:**

The conference will have duration of three full days. A longer conference will dissuade some people from attending it for two reasons: additional cost and time away from the desk. It would be held at a major hotel in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. The conference would begin with a reception the night before the beginning of the presentations.

Care must be taken to not overwhelm the conference with self-promotional activities. The messages of USAID-BEPS-ECACL will be heard and seen over all else if the conference is interesting and useful.

On the first full day of the conference, after introductions, there would be a key note speaker. The presentation of this person will be carefully planned to assure that it is right on the topic. Afterwards, breakout groups will analyze a topic presented by the key note speaker. After lunch the feedback from those groups will be presented. Later in the afternoon secondary speakers will present on other side topics.

Day two will begin with a field trip (or a various field trips) to specific work sites (or video tapes of the work sites) of children (or a school where there are working children, or a distance education program dealing with working children). After lunch there would be a mini-presentation by a panel, relating to the morning visits. Questions and answers would be fielded by the panel that would represent government, NGOs, USAID (or the Embassy) and an interested group, like unions for example.

Day three would begin with child laborers telling their stories, but they would always have an education angle. Other presenters would then discuss their specialties, but would try to relate their presentations to the comments of the children. After lunch, participants would be asked to draft an outline of an action plan to address education for working children in their own institutional setting.

An attempt would be made to let the conference out around 3:00 in the afternoon since many people would be able to begin their return home on the same day.



**Preliminary Illustrative Costs for Conference**

The following budget does not include core costs to ECACL. For instance, ECACL personnel would attend the conference, but related costs would not be included in the following budget since those costs are already anticipated as a part of doing business.

Also, the costs are estimated, not actually quoted by individuals or companies. In other words, it is a very rough estimate. There may even be serious omissions. It is just a starting place.

Transportation from the US for two persons @ \$1000 =	\$2,000
Transportation from Latin American Countries for 5 persons @ \$600 =	\$3,000
Per diem for four days for seven people @ \$170 =	\$4,760.
Hotel meeting room for three days @ \$300 per day =	\$900
Refreshments @ \$200 per day for three days =	\$600
Stipend for key note speaker @ \$350 per day for four days =	\$1400
Interpreters (2) at \$500 per day for three days =	\$3000
Simultaneous interpreting equipment for 15 people =	\$2000
Overall estimated costs:	+/- \$20,000 to \$25,000*

\*Assuming most participants, with the exception of visiting government officials, pay their own costs.