

# OUT OF WORK AND INTO SCHOOL

Final Report

**STOP**



**CHILD LABOUR**  
*School is the best place to work*



# CONTENTS

MESSAGE FROM ICCo	03
CHILD LABOR IN INDIA	04
STOP CHILD LABOR PROGRAM	10
PARTNERS	17
ROLE OF STAKEHOLDERS	22
MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND RESULTS	28
HUMAN INTEREST STORIES	33



# MESSAGE FROM ICCo



'Stop Child Labor – School is the best place to work' (SCL) is an international coalition which aims to eliminate child labor and ensure formal, full-time and quality education for all children.

Stop Child Labor (SCL) – India program is part of the global coalition for strengthening and expanding the Child Labor Free Zones with the active participation of all stakeholders.

In India, the program is coordinated by ICCo in collaboration with several local partners. The SCL coalition – India program is formed with an objective to develop the local partner organisations as resource organisations themselves who are proficient to train and share their experiences with more stakeholders and thus create a multiplier effect in the prevention and remediation of child labor. This objective is being achieved through capacity building, linking and learning programs, field exposure visits, peer accompaniment/ partner visit programs.

Another important objective of the platform is to put child labor and the CLFZ approach on the government's mandate and to develop strategies to prevent child labor.

Our partner organisations, through their interventions, are addressing the issues of child labor at different sectors especially textile industry, natural stone quarries, agriculture sector, leather and footwear industries etc. These interventions are being made in different parts of the country ranging from Tamil Nadu and Telangana in the south to Rajasthan in the north.

I feel proud that collectively we have been able to achieve impact on the ground during the first phase of the SCL program. Through this report, we aim to highlight the key achievements, results and the challenges faced in our endeavours to achieve Child Labor Free Zones in India.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alay Barah'.

**Alay Barah**  
Executive Director  
ICCo

# CHILD LABOR IN INDIA



Photo Credit: Joseph Thomas

Child labor continues to be a complex problem and poses a serious challenge in India despite of having several proactive measures within the law to address the issue. It has been inferred that children constitute about 13% of the total workforce in India. There are around 23.8 million children up to 18 years of age who work either as main or marginal workers in the country out of which 10.1 million are children between the age of 5-14 years. However, this number is estimated to be much higher in reality as the census does not take into account migrant children and also defines 'labor' in a narrow sense including only those working children as 'workers' who contribute to the national income.

**10.1 MILLION CHILDREN ENGAGED IN WORK INDIA**

**NUMBER OF CHILDREN ENGAGED IN WORK BETWEEN 5 TO 14 YEARS**

**4.5 MILLION** (Male icon) | **5.6 MILLION** (Female icon)

(ACCORDING TO 2011 CENSUS)

## CHILD LABOR MOST PREVALENT IN:

- 2.1 MILLION** UTTAR PRADESH
- 1.0 MILLION** BIHAR
- 0.84 MILLION** RAJASTHAN
- 0.7 MILLION** MADHYA PRADESH
- 0.72 MILLION** MAHARASHTRA



**CHILD LABOR CONSTITUTES FOR 13% OF THE WORKFORCE IN INDIA**

(ACCORDING TO 2001 CENSUS)

## A RECENT CHANGE

CHILD LABOR IS NOW INVISIBLE BECAUSE THE LOCATION OF THE WORK HAS CHANGED FROM FACTORIES TO THE HOMES OF BUSINESS OWNERS AND WORKERS.

### CENSUS REPORT 2001 V/S 2011

<b>RURAL</b>	<b>11.3 MILLION</b>	↓	<b>8.1 MILLION</b>
<b>URBAN</b>	<b>1.3 MILLION</b>	↑	<b>2 MILLION</b>

### CHILDREN ARE ENGAGED IN MANUAL WORK WHICH INCLUDES:





# FORMS OF CHILD LABOR IN INDIA

## CHILD LABOR, IN INDIA, IS PREVALENT IN THE FOLLOWING FORMS OF ACTIVITIES AND CIRCUMSTANCES:

A comparative study of the census of 2001 and 2011 conducted by Unicef in its report “State of child workers in India – Mapping trends”, reveals a sharp decline in the magnitude of child labor, more so in the rural areas. Contrary to this, the numbers of child workers in urban areas have increased considerably. This trend can be attributed to factors like growing demand for child workers in menial jobs in urban areas, fewer employment opportunities and low income in rural areas. Noticeably the census report of 2011 also shows a sharp decline in the total number of working children in the age group of 5-14 years to 0.43 million from 1.26 million compared to the figure reported in 2001. A number of factors can be attributed towards this achievement, like the efforts of the national government, international bodies, civil society organisations, role of national and international NGOs to eliminate child labor, implementation of Right to Education Act, strict implementation of the laws, etc. However, it is also widely believed that child labor continues to exist in large numbers but the sharp decline in the figures is actually due to the new definition of ‘labor’ adopted in 2011 census which counts working children as workers only if they contribute to the national income.

Moreover, migrant children and children of migrant families have not been included in the data. In recent years, owing to the stringent implementation of laws, growing awareness about exploitation of children and pressure from international organisations, there has been a change in the forms of child labor. The location of work has shifted from formal settings like factories to home-based set ups and informal sector. Thus, child labor has assumed a disguised form and the involvement of children in these informal settings has been on a surge.

A major challenge in dealing with the issue of child labor is to obtain detailed information about children working in the different sectors. Many children are working in informal sectors like agriculture and in urban settings like restaurants, motor repair workshops and other home-based industries.

We have seen that the government has taken pro-active steps to address the problem of child labor by adopting a dual-approach of working towards eradication of child labor as well as through addressing some of its root causes like poverty and lack of social security. However, it is important to note that assistance from civil society organisations is essential to address the issue in its entirety.



Children working in their ancestral land or as agricultural labor in the farms



Children employed in unpaid or underpaid work in factories, workshops, mines and quarries



Children working at their own homes or employed in informal service sector as domestic helps



Street children performing petty jobs like shoe polishing, rag picking, street vending and begging



Bonded labor – children are often pledged by their parents in exchange for paltry loans from money lenders.



Child prostitution and pornography



Children from rural settings who migrate to urban centres in search of seasonal work.

# AS PER CENSUS 2011

agriculture is the single largest sector which employs children.

## In rural areas,

**40%**

of the children are engaged as agricultural labourers,

**31.5%**

as cultivators

**4.6%**

are employed in household industry and

**23.8%**

are engaged in other areas of work

## In urban areas

**4.8%**

are employed as agricultural labourers

**4.4%**

as cultivators

**7.3%**

in household industry

and a majority of 83.4% in other category including

**18.1%**

wholesale and retail trade

**16.5%**

manufacturing in non-household industries as well as

**13.5%**

in household industries, mines and quarries, hotels and restaurants, transport, storage and communications, construction, financial intermediation, real estate, renting and business activities, private households etc.

According to estimates by the International Labor Organisation (2017), there are 152 million children, aged between 5 and 17, subject to child labor.

- Almost 1 in 10 children between the age of 5 and 17 years old have to work.
- About 4.3 million children aged below 18 years are in forced labor.
- 70.9% work in agriculture.
- 17.2% in the service sector.
- 11.9% in heavy industry.
- Most child labor takes place in the informal sector.
- Nearly 70% of the children do unpaid work supporting their family.

<http://www.stopchildlabour.eu/about-child-labor/>

<http://www.stopchildlabour.eu/together-we-can-stop-child-labor/#>

# STOP CHILD LABOR PROGRAM



Photo Credit: Joseph Thomas

Child labor is a harsh reality in developing nations. Since children are viewed as a cheap source of labor, more and more children are employed by various companies to extract work. This leads to lowering of wage rates in the market and growing unemployment among adults. Moreover, it creates a vicious cycle of poverty as children who are engaged in work from an early age do not go to school and thus their prospects of getting employed in a better job in future gets curbed too. This forces them to take up low-paying job as adults and subsequently their children are compelled to take up work from an early age.



## THE COALITION

In an attempt to address this problem, a number of organisations like the Algemene Onderwijsbond (AOB), Mondiaal FNV, Hivos, the India Committee of the Netherlands (ICN), Kerk in Actie & ICCO Cooperation and Stichting Kinderpostzegels Nederland came together in coalition to start an initiative called 'Stop Child Labor – school is the best place to work' (SCL) which advocates for combating all forms of child labor, providing quality formal education for all children and decent income for adults across the globe.

This initiative is coordinated by Hivos and local organisations in Asia, Africa and Latin America closely cooperating towards helping children get out of work and into school to attain formal education for a better future.



## VISION

“No child should work. Every child has a right to education, to play and to enjoy his or her childhood. A world without child labor is possible if everyone abides by these principles. By working together, seemingly insurmountable challenges such as poverty and inadequate or inaccessible education can be overcome.”<sup>1</sup>



## MISSION

The Stop Child Labor coalition aims to achieve this vision in two interlinked ways:

1. Working towards good quality formal education for all girls and boys and decent work for adults, particularly by promoting a community-based approach towards the creation of child labor free zones.<sup>2</sup>
2. Working towards child labor free supply chains and sectors (coffee, vegetable seeds, gold, garment/textiles, footwear and natural stone) by engaging and collaborating with businesses and CSR initiatives and other relevant stakeholders.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For more information on the Stop Child Labor vision and mission, see [http://www.stopchildlabour.eu/assets/HI-16-04-SCL-brochure\\_UK-WT\\_online-1.pdf](http://www.stopchildlabour.eu/assets/HI-16-04-SCL-brochure_UK-WT_online-1.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> For more information on the Stop Child Labor community-based approach, see our Handbook 5x5 stepping stones for creating CLFZ: [http://www.stopchildlabour.eu/assets/SCL\\_CLFZ\\_handbook\\_FINAL\\_LR\\_complete.pdf](http://www.stopchildlabour.eu/assets/SCL_CLFZ_handbook_FINAL_LR_complete.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> For more information, see the Stop Child Labor Action Plan for Companies to Combat Child Labor: <http://www.stopchildlabour.eu/assets/2015/06/actionplanchildlabour.pdf>



## AREA-BASED APPROACH

An area-based approach takes a small, homogenous, socially cohesive territory, often characterised by common traditions, a local identity, a sense of belonging or common needs and expectations, as the target area for implementation of programs such as creating Child Labor Free Zones. Having such an area facilitates the recognition of local strengths and weaknesses, threats and opportunities, endogenous potential and the identification of major bottlenecks for effective implementation. This approach is likely to work better than other approaches because it allows actions to be tailored more precisely to suit real needs and local competitive advantage.



## CHILD LABOR FREE ZONES (CLFZ)

The concept of CLFZ originated in 1992 with the initiative of MV Foundation (an Indian organization and technical partner in SCL phase I). In the last two decades it has managed to help over 1 million children to quit work and start schooling. Today, child labor free zones have been adopted globally and spread across various Asian, African and Latin American nations where local authorities, employers, teachers, parents and children work together to make their areas child labor free.



## DEFINING CLFZ

A child Labor Free Zone refers to a geographical area like a village, plantation area, a small island, urban neighborhood or a cluster of communities where a systematic approach is followed to get all children integrated and reintegrated in formal, full-time school and stop them from being engaged in any form of employment. It is believed that every child is entitled to the right to education thus all children, irrespective of the form of labor they are engaged in or the sector where they work should be removed from work and provided with an opportunity to study in school.

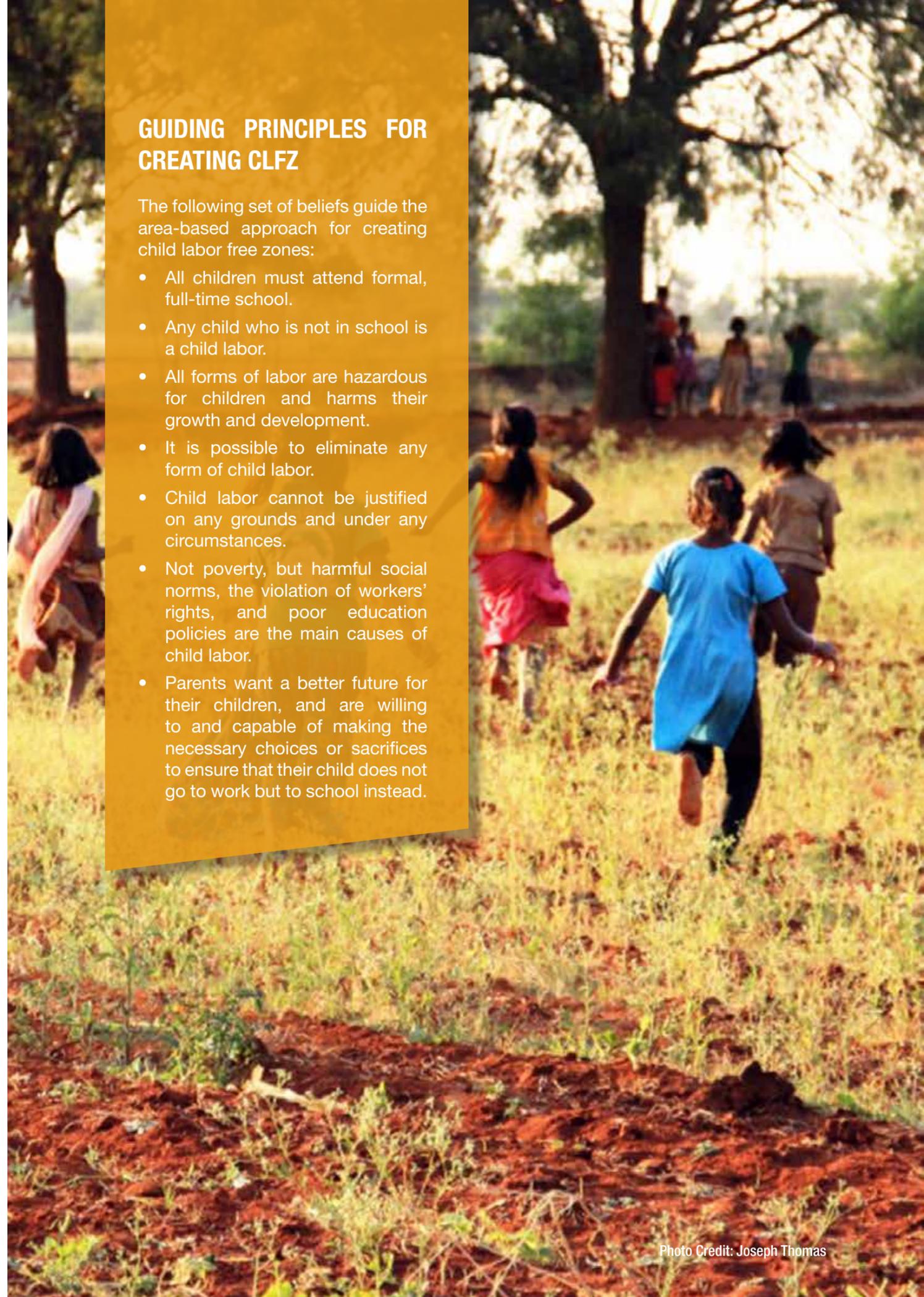
The focus, here, is not only on children who are engaged in hazardous occupations or those who are subject to worst forms of child labor or bonded labor but it also emphasizes on the so-called 'invisible' children who work on their family's land or as domestic workers. The aim is towards eradication of all forms of child labor.

Today, across the world, there have been attempts to create Child Labor Free Zones in several sectors including textile, leather, shoe, gold mining, natural stones, seeds and coffee apart from others.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR CREATING CLFZ

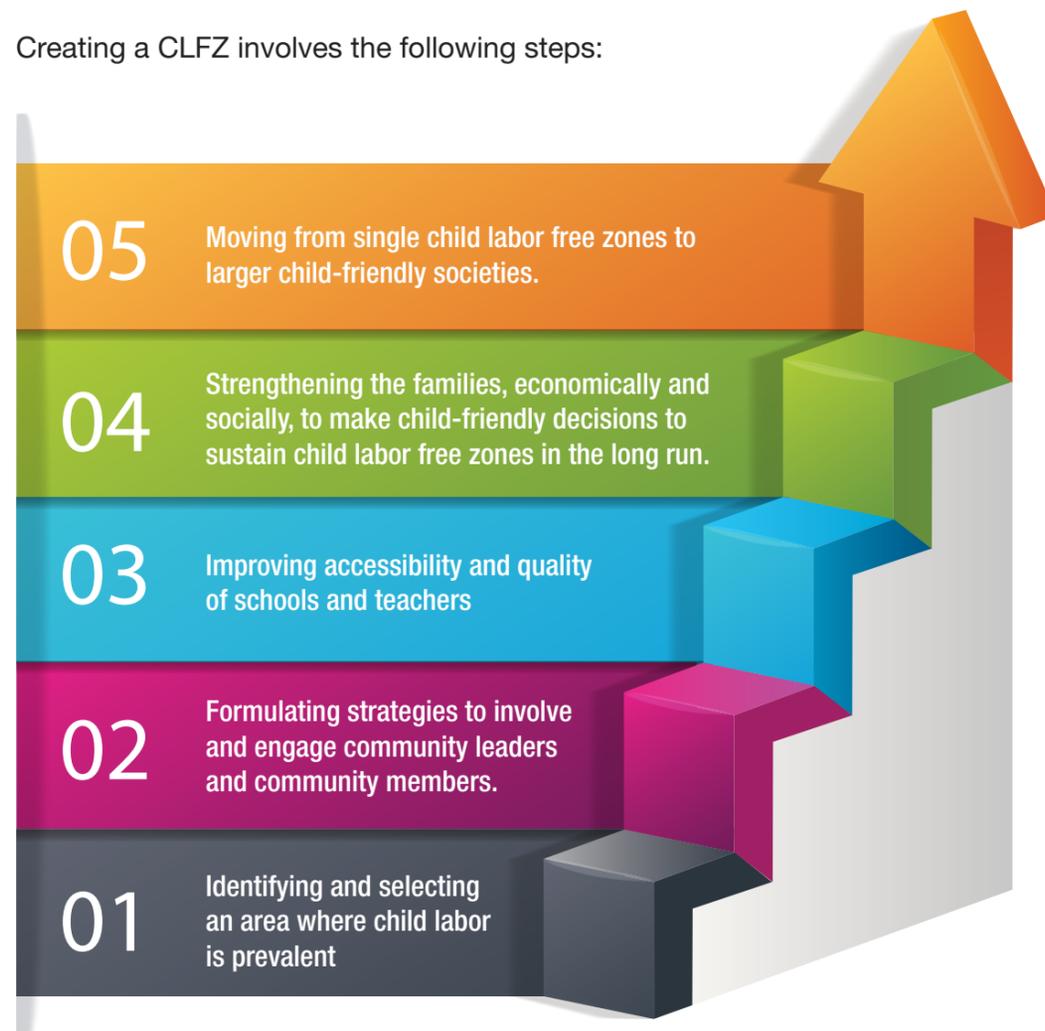
The following set of beliefs guide the area-based approach for creating child labor free zones:

- All children must attend formal, full-time school.
- Any child who is not in school is a child labor.
- All forms of labor are hazardous for children and harms their growth and development.
- It is possible to eliminate any form of child labor.
- Child labor cannot be justified on any grounds and under any circumstances.
- Not poverty, but harmful social norms, the violation of workers' rights, and poor education policies are the main causes of child labor.
- Parents want a better future for their children, and are willing to and capable of making the necessary choices or sacrifices to ensure that their child does not go to work but to school instead.



## STEPPING STONES FOR CREATING CLFZ

Creating a CLFZ involves the following steps:

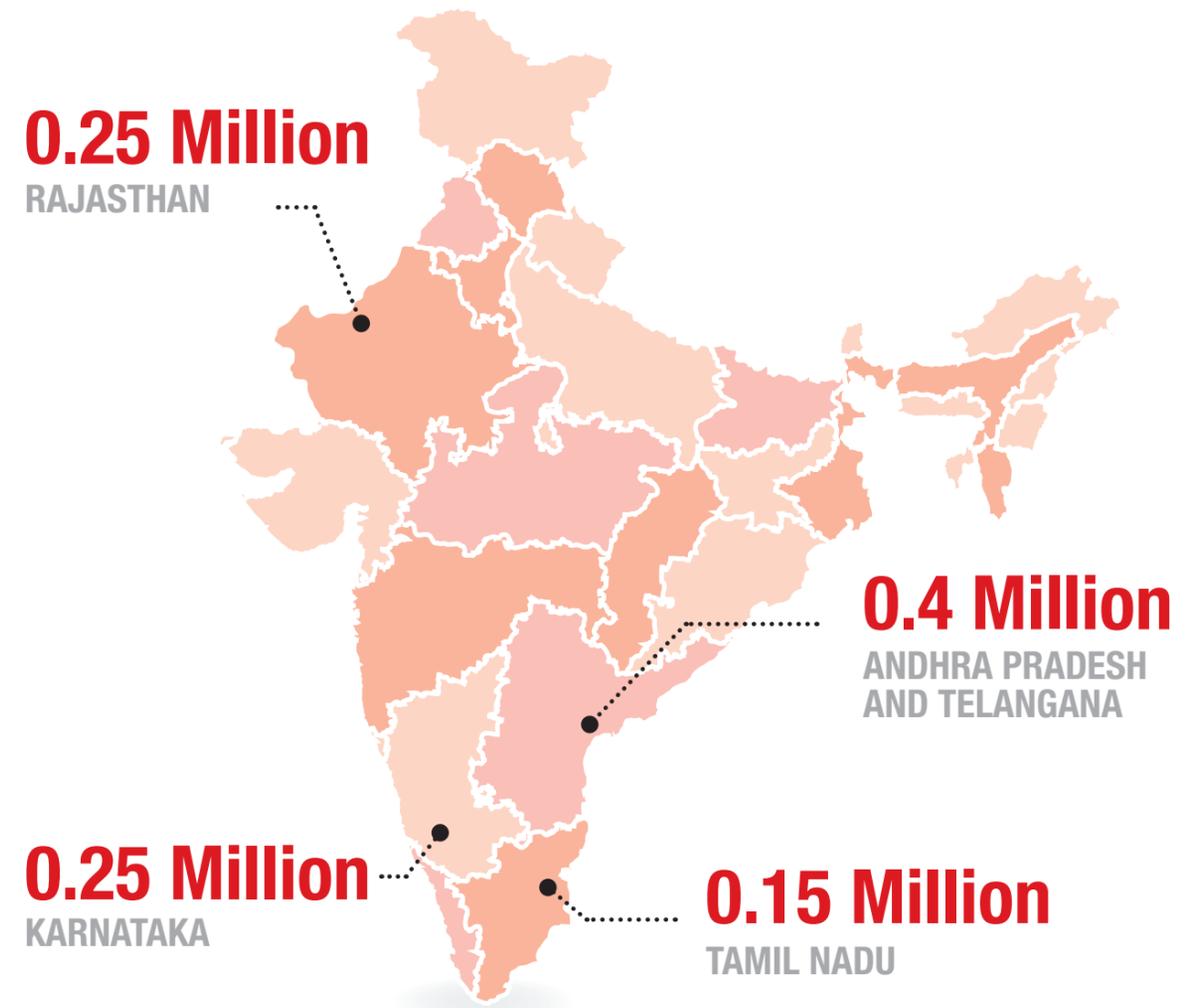


## STOP CHILD LABOR - INDIA PLATFORM

The Stop Child Labor India Platform for Learning and Linking started in January 2015 and is working to create CLFZs in collaboration with local organisations in textile, natural stone and leather footwear industries spread across different states of India. The project is being implemented by ICCo along with other partners namely BWI, Manjari, SAVE, CARDS, GRAMYA, MAEGA Trust and CASA. M V Foundation is the technical and knowledge partner.

The first phase of the Stop Child Labor programme concluded in April, 2017. It aimed to develop local partners into resource agencies, fit to train and share their experiences with more stakeholders and thus create a multiplier effect in the prevention and remediation of child labor. The programme has been successfully implemented in Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan, mainly with children working in textile industries and stone mining, respectively.

## CHILD LABOR SITUATION IN FOCUS STATES



### TAMIL NADU

India is the largest exporter of cotton yarn in the world contributing about 3.5 billion pounds of the 12.7 billion pounds global trade. 60% of the total cotton generated in India is produced in Tamil Nadu and also maximum number of cotton mills are located here which employs nearly 0.4 million employees. It was also reported that almost 75% of the total workforce in the textile industry of the state are adolescents. There are almost 0.15 million child labours in the state according to 2011 census.

## ANDHRA PRADESH AND TELANGANA

According to Census 2011, Andhra Pradesh stands seventh in terms of total population of children but it ranks second when it comes to the total number of child labourers, (14.7%, as per a report by CRY) next only to Uttar Pradesh.

Child labourers mostly work in agriculture, restaurant, beedi-making, bangle-making, belt-making units, shops and establishments, small factories, construction sites, in domestic sector, hybrid cotton seedling preparations, brick kilns, lime stone mining, stone cutting, scrap collection, etc.

## KARNATAKA

2011 census reports around 0.25 million child labourers in Karnataka mostly working in agriculture and sericulture activities, in bars and hotels, workshops and sweatshops, in hazardous sectors like illegal e-waste, construction sites, incense stick making, brick kilns, silk industry, chemical industries, food processing units, power looms, zari embroidery, as domestic helps and so on.

## RAJASTHAN

Rajasthan ranks third, next to UP and Andhra Pradesh, in terms of highest number of child labourers in India. According to Census 2011 there are around 0.25 million child workers in Rajasthan constituting nearly 5% of the work force in the age group of 5-14 years. According to the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), a large number of children below 18 years are engaged in gem polishing, carpet manufacturing, domestic work, begging, bidi industry, mines, agriculture, tea kiosks, restaurant, at brick kilns, etc. More than 38% children have been reported to be working in sand stone quarries in Kota and Bundi district. Children are mostly engaged in making cobble stones and usually work for more than 12-14 hours a day at meagre wages.

[http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/cotton-mills-in-tamil-nadu-using-forced-child-labor-report-114111501489\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/cotton-mills-in-tamil-nadu-using-forced-child-labor-report-114111501489_1.html)<http://www.labor.tn.gov.in/Labor/eradicationofchildlabour.jsp>

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-tamilnadu/bonded-child-labor-a-matter-of-concern-in-tirupur-district-study/article2323948.ece>

<http://www.thehansindia.com/posts/index/News-Analysis/2016-12-28/Child-slavery-shocking-in-Indias-textile-mills/270744>

<http://www.thenewsminute.com/article/despite-strict-laws-child-labor-continues-claim-victims-andhra-pradesh-and-telangana-50491>

<http://labor.ap.nic.in/childlabour>

[http://planningcommission.nic.in/reports/sereport/ser/ser\\_childlabour2801.pdf](http://planningcommission.nic.in/reports/sereport/ser/ser_childlabour2801.pdf)

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chennai/most-literate-child-workers-in-tami-nadu-kerala/articleshow/59294511.cms>

<http://www.dnaindia.com/bangalore/report-raise-child-labor-age-to-18-years-cry-1701240>

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/jaipur/Rajasthan-rank-high-in-child-labor/articleshow/18916983.cms>

<https://www.rajasthanblog.org/child-labor-rajasthan/>

# PARTNERS

## OUR PARTNERS:



## SAVE

Social Awareness and Voluntary Education known as SAVE, is a Non-Government Organization promoted in the year 1993 in response to the increasing child labor practices but eventually involved in the empowerment of women and comprehensive development of the textile and garment industry workers. SAVE envisions a child labor free society where the rights of the laborers, women and the children are respected and upheld, and they have equal salience in every sphere of their lives. Its mission emphasise on eradication of child labor practice, comprehensive empowerment of poor women, promotion of living standards of the migrant and other laborers of Tirupur knitwear industries, by formation of community strengthening structures, through awareness education, enhancing skills, capacity building, networking, lobbying and advocacy programs.

For more information, click the below link:

<http://www.savengo.org/tirupurtoday.html>



## CARDS

Community and Rural Development Society known as CARDS was started during the year 1979 and has been providing service to Dalits and Tribals in India through its various programmes. CARDS envisions that all Dalit Communities become an integral part of Indian Society in every single respect and that all people belonging to Dalit Communities become indistinguishable from other citizens by law, status, place, position, residence or any other consideration. The mission of CARDS is to strive towards liberation of Dalits from all form of discrimination and oppression both in law and in real practice and to strive towards ensuring that Dalits everywhere legitimately receive and enjoy the same rights and privileges as other citizens in similar position.

For more information, click the below link:

<http://www.cardsinternational.org/>



## GRAMYA

GRAMYA works on promotion of child rights with a focus on the girl child, survival and education and empowerment of women. The program tries to reach out to Lambada (indigenous community) women, girls and families to ensure education for girls and prevent violence against women. Gramya's vision is to create a just society, which will provide political, social and economic opportunities for women, especially tribal and dalit women, to help them achieve their rights, to improve their lives and livelihoods and to realize their full potential.

For more information, click the below link:  
<http://www.gramya.org.in/>



## MV FOUNDATION

The Mamidipudi Venkatarangaiya Foundation or MV Foundation (MVF) is a registered Trust established in 1981 as a research institution on issues relating to social transformation. In 1991, MVF began working actively on the issue of child labor and released the first 30 children from bonded labor in Ranga Reddy district.

MVF is gradually shifting its strategy from being an implementing partner to becoming a training and resource center to other NGOs in the country as well as the government. It is also providing technical support to NGOs in Africa and Central America through the 'Stop Child Labor Campaign'.

MVF has been actively involved in elimination of child labor through universalisation of education and has so far mainstreamed over 1 million children from work and in to full time formal education till they complete class 10. Some of its strategies notably the Residential Bridge Course Camps which are instruments of change which help in mainstreaming older children, who have been out of the school system for longer periods of time, have been acknowledged and accepted by the Government of India.

For more information, click the below link:  
<http://mvfindia.in/>



## CASA

Church's Auxiliary for Social Action (CASA) since its inception in 1947 has been working for eradication of poverty and injustice. In this quest, it has always sided with the poor and the marginalized. Initiated as a relief organization, today CASA is involved in disaster response, management and people centred empowerment oriented interventions throughout the country. The work of CASA has had significant impact on issues of its concerns addressing structural poverty being the key area. CASA promotes gender mainstreaming at all appropriate levels, mobilizes resources in favour of the poor and optimises all potentials and capacities existing within the organization and other partners. Its vision is to undertake various processes and the assessment of the context, organization development and capacities which leads to re-articulation of organizational vision, mission, role, strategy and programmatic thrust area.

For more information, click the below link:  
<http://casa-india.org/pages/home.html>



## ICCo

ICCo is a development organization that works towards a world in which people can live in dignity and well-being, a world without poverty and injustice. It works closely with local civil society organizations, including development organizations, educational institutions and businesses. Three values are central to our work: compassion, justice and stewardship. In India ICCo has been present for over 35 years working in a multi-stakeholder approach to achieve its core principles of Securing Sustainable Livelihoods and Justice and Dignity for all. One of ICCo's core intervention areas for a long time has been the Children at Risk programme. ICCo has also worked with a number of alliances to ensure a better future for children in the most marginalised areas.

For more information, click the below link:  
<http://icco-international.com/int/>  
<http://www.iccoindia.org/>



## BWI

The Building and Woodworkers International (BWI) is the global union federation for unions covering workers in the building, building materials, wood, forestry and related areas of work. With millions of children at work, many of them working as labourers in construction, BWI promotes practical solutions to the child labor crisis through schooling, campaign and organising. In India, the BWI campaign "Children Should Learn Not Earn!" has set up schools for child workers, pulling thousands of them out of building sites and getting them into the classroom. Similarly, the BWI Gender Empowerment programme has helped train thousands of women workers in union work to combat low pay and dangerous work in construction and wood and forestry.

For more information, click the below link:  
<http://www.global-unions.org/+bwi-+.html>



## MANJARI

Manjari is a non-governmental organization (NGO) based out of Rajasthan, India. It is committed to support the cause of Women's & Children's development through awareness and capacity building, individual and collective action, support and leadership development.

Gender Equality, Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights and Child Rights Protection are the main focus area of her work. Direct Intervention through implementation of programs / projects and Advocacy for the cause are the two approaches taken for implementation of her work. Its vision is to create a society where women and children can live a life with dignity, opportunity and security.

For more information, click the below link:  
<http://manjaringo.org/index.aspx>



## MAEGA TRUST

Mass Empowerment for Growth Alternatives Trust (MAEGA TRUST) is a women's organisation, initiated in 1998 by a group of women social workers to ensure 'Rights to every Girl Child and Women'. MAEGA Trust works with Dalit and Migrant Communities living in Stone Quarries of Kanchipuram District, Tamil Nadu, India. Annually, they reach out to 1500 Girl Children, 1200 Adolescents, 1000 Mothers, 3000 Dalit and Migrant families with direct interventions of this project.

For more information, click the below link  
<http://maegatrust.org/aboutus.html>



## VISTHAR

Visthar is a secular, non-profit organization, committed to enabling women, children and other marginalized sections realize their rights. They work to rehabilitate children at risk and train activists, students and organisations to work towards a just society. It promotes multi-culturalism and multi-lingualism by including members from different economic, educational and cultural backgrounds. Visthar aims to empower the poor to make them capable of advocating for their rights and interests. It also emphasizes on altering unequal power relations, ensuring equity rights of the marginalized and development with dignity. For this, they adopt a community-based approach. It has also been involved in community-centered advocacy for 17 years. One of the remarkable projects of Visthar is Bandhavi – an initiative for girls hailing from North Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, who are at risk of being dedicated as Devadasis. It is a residential school program that enables rescued girls to grow as individuals, as well as build a community based on love, respect, trust and friendship.

For more information, click the link below  
<https://www.indiamart.com/visthar-tr>

# ROLE OF STAKEHOLDERS



**THE SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF CLFZ APPROACH HAS BEEN POSSIBLE WITH THE EFFORTS OF SEVERAL STAKEHOLDERS INCLUDING NGOs, CBOs, PRIVATE COMPANIES, TRADE UNIONS, GOVERNMENT ENTITIES, KNOWLEDGE INSTITUTIONS, ETC.**

## IMPORTANCE OF STAKEHOLDERS

It has been noted that civil society organisations like Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs), community-based Organisations (CBOs), unions, etc. play an important role in the protection and promotion of human rights. As these organisations are better equipped with the ground realities and have a direct contact with the community, they help in better understanding of the issues and thus help in formulating and implementing effective programmes and policies to address them.

Several NGOs, CBOs and Trade Unions have played a significant part in establishing CLFZs in different parts of the country.



## ROLE OF NGOs

**The role of NGOs in creating a CLFZ can be summarised as:**

- Data collection – In order to gain a clear insight of the existing situation, NGOs conduct surveys and produce a detailed assessment of the acquired data.
- Developing community leadership – mobilize the community, identify key persons to take up leadership role and prepare them for the execution of programmes.
- Working towards ensuring improvement of education services
- Promoting collective welfare by supporting strengthening of family and community units while reducing child labor.
- Active engagement with government agencies and private enterprises.
- Training programmes and exposure visits – training different stakeholders—parents, teachers, youth, volunteers, government entities, trade union leaders, employers, representatives of local bodies, School Management committees, etc. – on several legal provisions and rights and issues like Right to Education Act and impact of work on the health of young children. NGOs also conduct exposure visits to production units and villages working towards creating CLFZs.
- Advocacy and networking - NGOs submit petitions on the condition of children and schools to the concerned departments and government officials; share experiences with government officials, unions, community members and other NGOs through workshops.
- Campaign and publicity – NGOs organise campaign movements or resort to street theatre, folklores, rallies, celebration of social events, posters, wall paintings, public meetings, etc. to generate publicity around the issue. It also coordinates with local and global actors for global campaigning and publicity.



## ROLE OF TRADE UNIONS

Trade unions can play a significant role in eradicating child labor in multiple ways. Some of them being:

- Promoting no tolerance towards child labor.
- Emphasising on including a clause on child labor in business agreements with production units.
- Organising awareness campaigns.
- Building pressure on companies to adopt and implement anti-child labor policies.
- Inviting NGOs and local groups to support their campaign and take part in their activities.
- Collaborate with other trade unions to engage community, local governments and companies.
- Establish Joint Action Committees at local level.
- Although teachers union has not been much active in India, experiences from Africa and Latin America have shown that they can play an important role in supporting child labor free zones by ensuring better attendance and quality education in schools. They can also help organise and support bridge courses and classes for out of school children and make school accessible for them.



## ROLE OF GOVERNMENT ENTITIES

Government entities can help in the drive against child labor by providing support in the form of:

- Collaborating and conducting meetings with different governmental departments, trade unions, civil society and chalk out a plan of action for creating CLFZ.
- Respond positively and timely to the petitions of civil society and other stake holders.
- Monitor the status of children with the help of local groups, NGO's and unions.
- Conduct awareness campaigns with local stake holders against child labor.
- Ensure the effective implementation of child protection laws and policies.
- To insure inclusive and equitable quality education for all.



## ROLE OF PRIVATE SECTOR/CORPORATES

Private sector also plays a key role towards achieving a child labor free community. MNCs, national companies as well as local companies have their specific roles to play:

- To ensure no children are employed or are at a risk to be employed in any stage of the supply chain, including subcontracted production units.
- Make agreement with the national and local companies to make their products child labor free. In case child labor is employed they should ensure remediation of these children through a community-based approach.
- Identify national and international agencies which may support the company in making its goods child labor-free and can also help in prevention and remediation of child labor.
- Provide incentives in terms of better prices, reasonable production time, etc. to local companies which adhere to the principle of child labor free production.
- National companies should also take a pledge to keep their production child labor free at all levels including the suppliers and subcontractors.
- Participate in community-based remediation of child labor. Seek help from local NGOs in identifying cases of child labor within the area of the establishment and plan for its prevention and remediation.
- Abide by the international, national and local laws and regulations which prevents child labor.
- Generate awareness among the workers against child labor.



## ROLE OF COMMUNITY

Community entities can support the fight against child labor in the following ways:

- Acting as a watchdog for the protection of child rights by monitoring child labor and sending petitions to local government.
- Informing parents about the issue and orienting them to take a practical step.
- Engaging local government to monitor the movement of migrating and immigrating children by maintaining registers and updating them regularly as per the Right to Education Act.
- Ensuring proper implementation of the Right to Education Act.
- Working with local government and regular petitioning for improving the condition of schools like better infrastructure, more teachers, etc.



## ROLE OF MEDIA

**Media, electronic, print as well as social media, plays a very important role in realizing the vision of creating a child labor free zone.**

- It can expose or bring to the fore certain firms and business houses which are not conforming to the international and national standards of child labor, employ children, exploit them or violate their rights.
- It helps in generating awareness among the public about the existing situation at work places and helps in creating responsible consumers, makes the general masses aware of the laws, programs and schemes that prevent child labor.
- It acts as facilitators of rights of the vulnerable group.
- It highlights the hazards and ill-effects of child labor.
- It helps in publicizing the efforts to eradicate child labor.
- It helps in highlighting the companies which adhere to the norms of creating a child labor free environment.
- It acts as an important channel to document the best practices and success stories of organisations/companies/individuals that work to promote Child Labor Free Zones.
- It ensures accountability on the part of the government by identifying shortcomings in the implementation of laws, programs and schemes related to children.

## CONCLUSION

Although important steps have been taken, there is still much ground to be covered when it comes to effectively combating child labor in supply chains and ensuring that children working in these supply chains are guided from work to education. The measures taken by the private sector to ensure that there is no child working at their establishments have not solved the issue, but rather have merely caused a shift of child labor to other parts of the supply chain and to other sectors and regions. It is also noted that supply chain actors are hiding (risks to) child labor and are reluctant to cooperate in working towards real improvements, including traceability and transparency. Building trust with companies and their suppliers and convincing them to partner with us has been a tedious and time consuming process but has been worthwhile. The positive side is that all these endeavors have convinced us that we need to continue working in this direction to truly establish mutual commitment and realize the results that we started out to achieve.

## WAY FORWARD

On the basis of the outcomes of phase-1 of the program *Out of Work and into School: Joint efforts towards creating child labor free zones*, spanning from 2014-2017, we intend to carry forward and build up on the initiative in the follow up phase of 'Getting Down to Business' (2017-2019). The next phase specifically focuses on changing policies and practices of national and international companies and CSR initiatives towards including a community-based approach for the elimination of child labor. To realize this, efforts will be made to link companies and CSR initiatives to existing child labor free zone (CLFZ) projects and/or to support them in setting up community-based projects in collaboration with Stop Child Labor (SCL) program local partners.

Another element of this programme will include engaging and convincing key stakeholders about the importance and value of the CLFZ and community-based approach. This will build pressure on companies, CSR initiatives and other relevant actors to make their policies and practices child labor free.

# MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND RESULTS



Photo Credit: Joseph Thomas



## BWI (RAJASTHAN)

**BWI's interventions were focused at holistic community development with priority to mainstreaming of children into formal education. Here are the key outcomes:**

- 60 children from poor socio-economic strata have been extended support for study materials and uniforms in Palri Mangaliya CLFZ.
- 3 physically challenged children in Palri Mangalia have been provided tricycles to enable them to attend school regularly.
- 8 SHGs – 5 in Palri Mangalia and 3 in Purohitsar – functional in the two CLFZs have been used to reach out to and to organise women workers.
- 272 workers have been registered with the Rajasthan State Construction Workers Welfare Board.
- Benefits to the tune of INR 1.21 Million were secured for workers under the Rajasthan Construction Workers Welfare Board including scholarship support for children, maternity benefit, housing scheme and support for girl children.
- Organised 12 health camps for workers community.
- A 24x7 Child helpline number to register complaints on issues like delay in scholarships, non-provision of play materials, information on extra-curricular activities and on other major issues was made functional.



## MANJARI (BUDHPURA)

**Manjari worked towards establishing a Child Labor Free Zone in the sandstone industrial area of Budhpura. The outcomes of its efforts are:**

- 1046 children were identified as out of school children in 6-17 years age group, out of which 117 girls were placed in formal school.
- 741 children prevented from dropping out of school education.
- 1237 children involved in activities undertaken in school. Earlier this number was only 99.
- 80 boys and 578 adults have improved their income through different income generation activities.
- Working conditions have improved for 3250 adults and 80 youth.
- Over 250 families linked with different social security schemes.
- 9 Child rights protection forum (CRPF) were formed with 10-15 members.
- 324 Labours were diagnosed from December, 2016 to April, 2017. Out of these, 29 were identified with silicosis and were helped to get their health certificates issued.
- Through constant follow up with district level authorities 29 people from CLFZ area have received compensation of INR 3700000 (Euro 50000) each.
- 8 children forums were constituted at the school level.
- Through PRA exercise 8 families run by widows were identified as most vulnerable families and provided livestock support to start their livelihood.
- 135 adolescent girls were organized into 7 groups where they are trained on life skills.



## SAVE (SOCIAL AWARENESS AND VOLUNTARY EDUCATION, TIRUPUR)

**Pandiyan Nagar and Annanagar in Tirupur were formally declared as Child Labor Free Zones on December 28, 2016. These two wards are totally inhabited by the working community and had the highest concentration of child labor, mostly migrant.**

**Some of the major outcomes of the programme in Tirupur are:**

- Reached out to 29 schools providing educational opportunity to 3865 children of school going age in ward 16 and 17 of Tirupur.
- Monitored the quality of education in 9 schools within Child Labor Free Zone areas.
- Since June 2016, 39 students (17 boys and 22 girls) have been associated with the Bridge Course Centre and have received educational, nutritional and psychological support.
- 6 Anganwadi centres running in the region benefited 184 children (89 boys and 95 girls).
- 4 Child Rights Protection Forum were constituted comprising 114 members (57 women and 57 men) each member was entrusted with the task of monitoring children of 30-35 families.
- 84 new Garment workers Education Group (GWEG) comprising of 1259 members (419 male and 840 female) were educated on labor law and worker's rights and on issues like safety, sexual harassment at workplace and welfare schemes, etc.
- 1259 garment workers, including 419 males, were sensitised on gender issues.
- 1259 members of the 84 GWEGs were trained on Financial Literacy and Social security benefits.
- 3 private export garment companies outside the CLFZ such as Eastman Clothing Pvt. Ltd., SCM garments and K.P.R Pvt. Ltd. extended their support for the creation of CLFZ.
- 234 small, medium and mini garment enterprises within CLFZ extended their support for the creation of CLFZ.

## ACHIEVEMENTS - SCL INDIA PLATFORM

- A strong SCL Platform was established that was able to lobby and advocate for improving education and work with a multi stakeholder approach in community based settings to strengthen existing structures and social welfare schemes.
- Organizing the National Consultation on Creating Child Labor Free Zones in Delhi was a significant achievement. During the consultation all the participants, including the government and private sector, adopted the Delhi Declaration.
- Reached out to more than four hundred organisation through six State Consultations to boost the efforts at the state level and utilize the good examples of the practical Child Labor Free Zone projects
- SCL partners were developed into resource agencies themselves, fit to train and share their experiences with more stakeholders and thus create a multiplier effect in the prevention and remediation of child labor.



Photo Credit: Joseph Thomas

# HUMAN INTEREST STORIES

# SREE LATA LEARNS TO SMILE AGAIN



Photo Credit: ICCO Cooperation

Sree Lata is a reserved girl of 11 years. One can notice the sparkle in her eyes when she is asked about her studies. Studies greatly interest her but the harsh realities she has experienced in just eleven years of her life, many people don't experience all their life.

Sree Late belongs to a small village in Guntur, Andhra Pradesh. Hers is a family of five including her parents and siblings aged 13 (brother) and 9 (sister). Both her parents work as labourers and therefore the concept of educating children has been eluding the family.

Unlike most of the children of her age, Sree Lata till 5 months back did not have a routine life where she went to school, played games with her friends or spent time watching TV at home. Instead her day started with sweeping floors of the house where she was employed as a domestic help and ended with washing the utensils after dinner. Looking back, she feels very hurt thinking how one of her own relatives had taken advantage of the family's economic vulnerability and had brought her to town, assuring her of good education and a decent job. However, what she underwent for the next two years can only be described as inhuman and certainly a test of her strength. "I had to wake up as early as 5 in the morning to do the domestic chores and never went to bed before 12:30 or 1 at night" says Shree Lata. Her daily chores included sweeping the house, mopping, preparing meals, washing utensils, and other house related work. "Despite of doing all the household work, I was beaten up with a leather belt for the smallest of reasons. I was never given enough to eat, so I used to sleep with my stomach partially empty night after night" exclaims Sree Lata. One can quickly sight the gloominess on her face when she recalls her work days. She further narrated that even though there was some sort of agreement wherein the employer had to pay INR ten thousand to her family per annum but neither she nor her family received that money.

MV Foundation's Children Welfare Committee (CWC) have been working tirelessly to help children like Sree Lata who grapple with challenges of loss of education. As a coalition member of the Stop Child Labor program, they have focussed on mitigating and elimination child labor in the area. When the CWC came to know about Sree Lata's fate, they immediately sprang into action. Sree Lata was rescued from her exploitative employers and a lawsuit was filed against them.

It has been 5 months now that Sree Lata became a part of the bridge school run by MV Foundation. The education set up helps drop outs and non-school going children with an accelerated learning pattern, where they are taught in a residential set up and prepared for mainstream education. The model has already impacted the lives of many children Like Sree Lata who had lost hope of getting educated again. Being asked about her daily routine now brings a big smile to Sree Lata's face. She smilingly shares "Now my day starts with a prayer, then I go for classes after which I play with my new friends. Now I also get to watch TV"

Reintegration into education has already started to show positive signs for Sree Lata. She wants to become a teacher on growing up. She is very clear that she has to take education to children who suffer misfortune at an early age like her.

# INTERACTION WITH RAJIV CHILD RIGHTS PROTECTION FORUM (CRPF)



Photo Credit: ICCO Cooperation

K Chandran comes across as a focussed man with a lot of assurance and belief in what he does. A tailor by profession, today he heads the 'Rajiv Child Rights Protection Forum'. The forum's work focusses on ward number 16 & 17 in Tirupur district. There is a mix of members and office bearers who are present for the interaction. Those present include Samat Kumar (62), Sammugam (65), S.Sampurnam (52), V Manimegalai (39), and D Jayalaxmi (36).

Interestingly, Tirupur has 6500 MSME units in operation which engage approximately 700000 workers. 80 percent of these workers are employed in the garment industry itself. It therefore comes as no surprise that all the committee members are tailors by profession, except for V Manimegalai, who works as a school correspondent, encouraging children to enrol into formal education.

Chandran informs that wards 16 and 17 had its own share of problems few years back. There was less focus on education and even children were forced to engage in labor to ensure that all the resources in the family contributed financially. He further shares "When the SAVE team introduced the concept of SCL program, our initial reaction was that it would disturb our work, but gradually as they sensitized us, we felt that this was something for the good of our own community."

The forum, therefore, was formed in 2014 and the group started meeting regularly on a monthly basis. They started listing down the major problems in the area and the corresponding strategies to mitigate it. Sammugam, the senior most member in the group shares "When we started this group, the key challenges we faced were of parents not willing to send children to school due to financial needs; Convincing parents and following up with them multiple times to send their children to school."

"I must credit the SAVE team for convincing the elders and giving them confidence in the movement. Viewing it as a community benefiting exercise, many elders (besides the forum members) from both the wards started taking interest in the program and therefore the process of change strengthened" exclaims Samat Kumar.

The forum, which over the period of time has become a strong body at the ward level, has a clear cut agenda in all its meeting. Some key issues like analysis of the problem why children are not going to school; strategizing on how they can bring children back to school; building monitoring mechanisms like sub groups that keep a vigil on children's schooling record are some of the practices that the forum has put into place since its inception. The group works closely with the School Management Committee and the Parent-Teacher Association to ensure that children are on track and that no child is out of School. The impact is visible, from the two wards, all 38 and 65 children respectively are enrolled in School.

The forum strongly feels that the process of change has been possible because of the collective effort of Forum members, community people, SCL coalition, and the school authorities.

"We want ward number 16 and 17 to be a role model for all the other 60 wards in Tirupur. With the knowledge and confidence that the SCL program has given us, we are confident to take this initiative forward in the right direction" says a confident Chandran.

# SANJAY AND SCHOOL

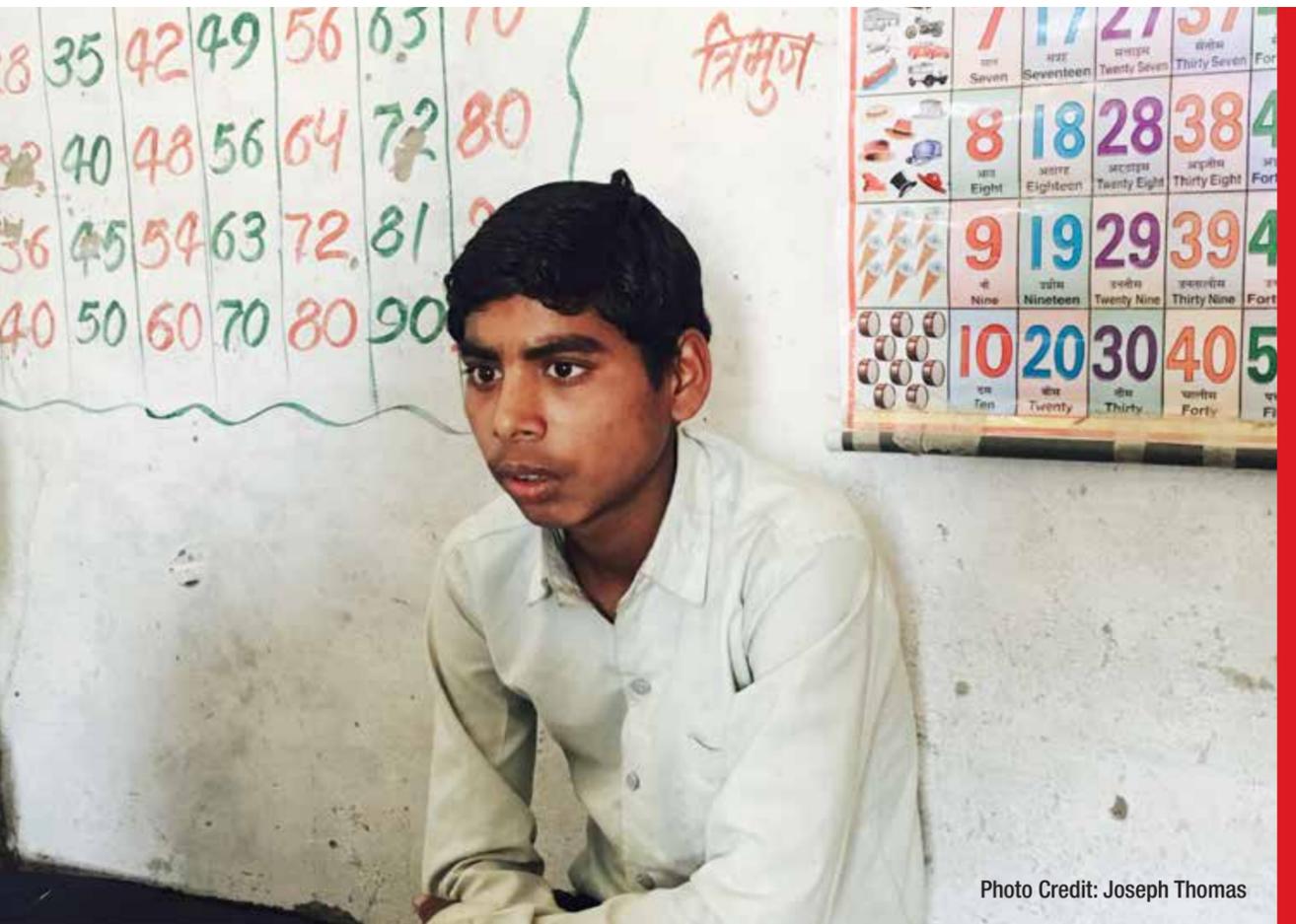


Photo Credit: Joseph Thomas

12 years old Sanjay is very vibrant in school. He takes responsibility for looking after the school while the teacher is away for other official work. The School is a two room structure accommodating 41 children from Class 1 to 5 (on days when everyone is present). Having a single teacher for such a diverse group is sadly nothing new for government schools set up in rural areas of Rajasthan. Sanjay takes great pride in his studies and in the fact that his teacher has so much faith in him. This is very different than how life was for him around 5 years back.

Sanjay's place of origin is a small village in Madhya Pradesh (MP). It has only been two years since he has moved to Budhpura, Rajasthan and also to his new school. While at MP, he used to stay with his grandmother and go to school. However, as destiny would have it, his grandmother, who was ill for a very long time, eventually passed away. At that moment, Sanjay was left on his own. He had nobody to look after him.

His parents, who have been living in Budhpura for past few years, worked as labourers. Given the circumstances, they brought Sanjay to Budhpura to stay with them. Since he was already 8 years old by then and big enough to engage in light labor, his father asked him to contribute to the financials of the family and he readily agreed. "I used to work from 7am to 7pm on all seven days of the week and had given up on the idea to going to school again" shared Sanjay. His basic work was to break cobalt stone into smaller pieces. For doing this, he was paid INR 3 per piece. His father used to give him INR 20 per week as pocket money and he was happy with the arrangement. He recalls spending his money mostly on chocolates and gradually, due to peer pressure, he also got into the habit of smoking. There were 8 more boys of his age where he was working and for most of them, smoking was symbolic of being an adult. "My workplace was very hot and dusty. To work in the open sun at soaring temperatures drained me completely by the end of the day" recalls Sanjay.

It was then that his life took another turn, this time for the good and he was found by Manjari workers. After knowing his story, the NGO workers from Manjari met the stone mine owner and sensitized him on the issue. Manajri, runs a motivation centre, where the school drop outs are encouraged and guided for mainstreaming into formal education again.

After Manjari spoke to the mine owner (who agreed to let Sanajay go), they motivated his parents. Sanajay was back in School! By now Sanjay had realized how very tough it was to manage in the outside world as a labourer. Subsequently, he embraced his books and School. Today, his progress is visible. Recently, he was awarded by the Minster for Women and Child Development for his zeal to study. This has highly motivated him and he is well and truly on track to mark a mark in life. His ambition is to become a doctor and he believes that education will help him to realise his dreams.

# KHAN MAZDOOR SHIKSHA SAMITI – A MOVEMENT OF CHANGE



Photo Credit: Joseph Thomas

Some three years back there was no formal committee to address the needs or rights of children in Palri Mangaliya village in Jodhpur. "Our children who were small used to play in the locality, and those who were big enough to work went to the stone quarries to work. We did not bother about educating them as financial needs of the family overpowered the need for education" shares Mansi Devi, one of the village elders and a part of the committee which is doing commendable work to bring education to this remote village in Jodhpur.

Ironically, hardly any of the villagers in Palri Magaliya have completed their schooling. The pattern of labor has been very clear. As soon as a child is big enough to work, it is engaged in the sorting process at the stone mines, when they grow up further, the work description diversifies to loading, unloading, and breaking boulders among other things. Visibly this work pattern not only deprives them of education but also makes them vulnerable to various issues including the deadly silicosis disease which has plagued the Palri Mangaliya village.

In 2014, as part of the SCL program, when the foundation for Khan Mazdoor Shiksha Samiti, a School management committee was laid, it faced a dual challenge of confidence building of the group members and convincing the parents to send their children to School. Expectedly, the committee met with stiff resistance from the parents, who were completely against the idea of sending their children to School over work, as it would impact the economics of the family.

The committee, which comprises predominantly of strong willed women was given confidence and support by the SCL program and subsequently what had seemed like an improbable task, started to show some positive signs. The committee worked hard to sensitize parents on the brighter prospects of education in the future and corresponding dark side that sending children to work presented. Slowly but surely, changes started to occur. Parents started off with agreeing to send one of their children to school. Subsequently, noticing the change that education had brought on their school going child, they enrolled other children too for schooling. Today the village presents a totally different picture. The committee members, who earlier

were full of apprehensions, are calling the shots now. They have a well-defined agenda for the village that includes cross checking the attendance of the children with the School, checking on the learning of the children, encouraging children to take time out for studies at home too, conducting sensitization rallies in support of educating children, and recording children's response on their schooling, among others. The committee also follows a strategic approach wherein if a man doesn't agree to send his children to School, the committee mobilizes the wife and children and creates social pressure to which the man ultimately gives in.

Patashi Devi shares an example where she stopped cooking for her son as he wasn't allowing her grandchildren to go to School. The son was taken aback by this response from his mother and had to agree to their enrolment in School. She further exclaims "Individually we cannot do much but collectively when many minds come together to think through for solutions, there is always a breakthrough"

The committee is already a point of reference for the adjoining villages. Now they have gone one step further and are planning to work on vocational education for girls by setting up a stitching centre which will ensure that the girls learn and earn.

"No concrete change is possible without institutional support. However, to make this movement sustainable, the onus lies on the villagers. What has started through this initiative will hopefully change the life and livelihood pattern of this village" exclaims Rukmini Devi, an elder member of the committee.

# INTERACTION WITH EASTMAN GARMENT EXPORTERS



Eastman is a familiar name in Tamil Nadu in general and with textile industry in particular. With 40 companies falling under Eastman exporters, ensuring responsibility and accountability for compliances is the key function of the entity. Thomas, a 50 year old professional works as the General Manager – Compliances for Eastman exporters. He has a vast experience of over 20 years in the garment industry. In Eastman, he has been looking at compliance for more than six years now. Eastman has renowned names like Nike, GAP, TCP, and Wallmart in its decorated list of buyers worldwide, therefore the entity has a huge potential in terms of addressing issues and ensuring

impact in the supply chain. Thomas is very candid about the SCL program that has been initiated and says “Although Eastman has in-house procedures in place like technical and social audit but initiatives such as the SCL program are needed for the betterment of the society at large, particularly children”

Adhering strictly to its policies, Eastman does not employ child labor. They do a comprehensive background check for suppliers and have a declaration for a child labor free supply chain. Thomas believes that employing children doesn’t effectively help the companies as big buyers are always very particular about the quality and timely delivery of the product. He feels that this process is easier to execute with adults rather than children.

As part of its Social Audit and correspondingly the SCL program to ensure child labor free supply chain, Eastman has a tie up with SAVE, the SCL program coalition partner, wherein SAVE staff engages with the workforce at Eastman and provides them with trainings on best practices that they can employ to ensure child labor free supply chain.

“Whatever is being done through this partnership is transparent, caters to the procedures at Eastman, serves the SCL program goals, and most importantly ensures that children are at school and not at work” remarks Thomas.

# SUJATA FINDS SCHOOL AGAIN



Life comes with a spectrum of challenges and for a single mother, these challenges are sometimes larger than life. Right from her birth 44 years old Kavita has seen the bitter side of life, however, after the early demise of her husband, there was nothing more to look forward to in life for her. It was all about survival, and she did survive. With no male member in the family, she had the responsibility to take care of her 11 years old daughter Sujata. Being unskilled didn't help her cause either. Therefore she took up begging to make both ends meet. She was quick to learn the tricks of the trade and making her only daughter beg as well was an inviting option for her. Sujata was studying in grade 2 and was barely 10 when her mother indulged her into begging. The experience initially came as a shock to her. She recalls "Initially I used

to beg after my School hours but later on my mother's insistence, I used to beg for the entire day." There is a sad expression on her face when she remembers her begging days. "People would often rebuke me and use foul language with me when I pleaded with them to give me something" remembers Sujata.

Her earnings per day amounted to INR 100 on an average. A big share of this as expected was taken away by her mother. Whatever little she was left with, she used it to buy chocolates and potato wafers. In between, she also made friends who made her spend on country made liquor.

With the proactive response of the MV Foundation workers, Sujata was recovered. The SCL programme was used as an effective tool to develop Child Labor Free Zones in Saroor Nagar, the native place of Sujata and also at other places in Hyderabad. After she was brought to MV Foundation's Bridge School Camp, she did not feel good initially. She used to experience frequent craving for alcohol. However, after a few days, she started feeling better. Today, she is one of the better students who is accelerating in her studies and overall development. Sujata now dreams of becoming a doctor and is working hard towards achieving that.

# INTERACTION WITH BRIDGE COURSE CAMP IN-CHARGE



Passam Vani comes across as a seasoned lady. The first exchange of pleasantries with her tell you that she is a calm and composed lady who smilingly manages the day to day affairs of the camp. She joined MV Foundation's Bridge Course Camp (BCC) in 2008 in the capacity of the camp in-charge. Ever since, she has been executing her challenging job with perfection. "Child labor was a massive problem in Tirupur when I first joined. I remember the enrolment number back then was more than 160" shared Passam Vani. The Camp has made steady progress since, as is evident in the way the enrolment number has reduced.

"The strong platform that the Stop Child Labor programme provided helped us to further reduce the number of child labor cases in the area" exclaims Vani. She believes that institutional support has been the key to this welcome change. She also shared that working as a consortium under the SCL program was an excellent learning opportunity for all the partners. It gave them strength and confidence to create sustainable change. Today the Camp's enrolment figures are less than 110.

The accelerated learning provided in the BCC is usually for a period of 6-8 months after which the children are mainstreamed. However the process does not end there. Once mainstreamed, these children are tracked and followed up till they complete their education. Vani, who herself is a mother of a two year old girl understands that dealing with children is not easy, especially when they come from diverse backgrounds having been subjected to hardship early in life. "One of the biggest challenges that I have to negotiate early on is to bring the child to a level where he/she listens to you. Since the kind of children we admit here are not used to a controlled setting, very often

they find themselves out of place and are rude to most of us" said Vani. Vani however is very patient with the new entrants and gives them time enough to get used to the BCC environment. Besides adjustment being a problem for the newly enrolled children, there are also problems created by their parents. Parents sometimes come back to the camp and protest for their children to be handed over to them. Vani, however, is strong in her stance. She understands that BCC offers the best opportunity for the development of these young kids and therefore tactically sends away the parents, somehow convinced.

The residential setting that houses only female caretakers/teachers is a safe learning place for the BCC children. Vani also feels that having children of different age groups is easier to deal with rather than having everyone of the same age group.

The Camp continues to reform dropouts/child labourers and with the establishment of the SCL programme platform, it looks forward to further reducing the number of children to a minimum, thus establishing Tirupur as a Child Labor Free Zone.

# INTERACTION WITH WOMEN'S EDUCATION GROUP



Woman's Education Group is yet another group led by women in Tirupur that is contributing to the changing dynamics of the area. The story of these change makers, who focus specifically on the children in their locality, is not the major highlight of the area; nonetheless, they continue to work effectively and consistently in their fight against child labor

The 15 ladies of this group come across as very simple and straight forward in their approach. It is however, commendable to see these women, leading by example,

to design a child labor free society. Having worked in small textile units/factories at some point in time, they have mastered the art in stitching, trimming, and packaging. Almost all of them now work as home based workers with consistent demand all year round. Working in factories also meant spending long hours away from home and children. Generally, a textile worker spends 8.5 hours in a factory. This was a huge factor why these women decided that they could work from home and yet be as productive and thus the home based work started. What it also did is, it allowed them to spend more time with their children, which meant children remained in their scrutiny for a good amount of time.

Jayanthi is a home based worker and a member of the group. She is 41 years old and a mother of two. On asking her if she sometimes gets tempted to take children's help in her work, she responded "I have set my work time as per the children's school timings. Once they leave for School, I start with my work and before they reach home, I wrap up my day's work." This gives Jayanthi a good 5-6 hours to do the home based

work without involving children. Another group member Bhubaneshwari shared that she has strictly warned her children to not even touch the cloth material. She instead encourages them to play games or revise their class work.

After the Stop Child Labor programme was initiated, SAVE has also empowered the group to start a Self Help Group. The intra-group loaning has helped the group to use this money for important issues including children's education. Besides this, the group has a well-defined role for each of the members. This includes ensuring that children do not go to work in textile factories or elsewhere, organizing activities for children that motivate them to study and rewarding them, ensuring that parents are responding well to their children's education and involving them in advisory sessions

The group comes together every Sunday to take a stock of the progress of the group's activities, specifically the improvements made with regard to the children in the locality.

# MEETING EMMIMMAL – THE CHILD RIGHTS ADVOCATE



Photo Credit: ICCO Cooperation

Although she is an active member of the Child Rights Protection Forum (CRPF), this is not the primary reason why the community recognizes 41 years old Emmimal. She is known to everyone around as the lady who rents out her house to tenants with a non-negotiable of getting them admitted in the School. Her husband works as a real estate agent and therefore the family is well placed financially. She herself is an inspiration for the community, having ensured that both her children go to school and getting them to a level where they are doing very well in their Grade 10 and undergraduate courses respectively.

Emmimal has two houses and she has been giving them on rent for the past six years. Although she always believed that children needed to be educated properly for the community to grow but it was only at her own level that she was able to do things. In this regard, SAVE has helped to bring out her best by providing her with leadership platforms. As a part of the Stop Child Labor programme, CRPF was initiated, and active community people like Emmimal were assigned a leadership role. This has worked well for her and the community. Now every month the group meets to discuss cases that need help. “Monitoring activities to stop the menace of child labor is much easier to do in a group as tasks are divided and the outreach is more.” shared Emmimal.

She is one of a kind in the community who has set rules for her tenants as to how they treat their children. “Two of the compulsory things for my tenants are to look after their children well and to send their children to School.” shared Emmimal with pride.

People like Emmimal are inspiring others too in the community to follow their footprints. Everyone seems to be taking this change in a positive stride and are determined to contribute in their own capacities to make their respective areas better for everyone to live in.

# INTERACTION WITH MERCHANT'S ASSOCIATION



Photo Credit: ICCO Cooperation

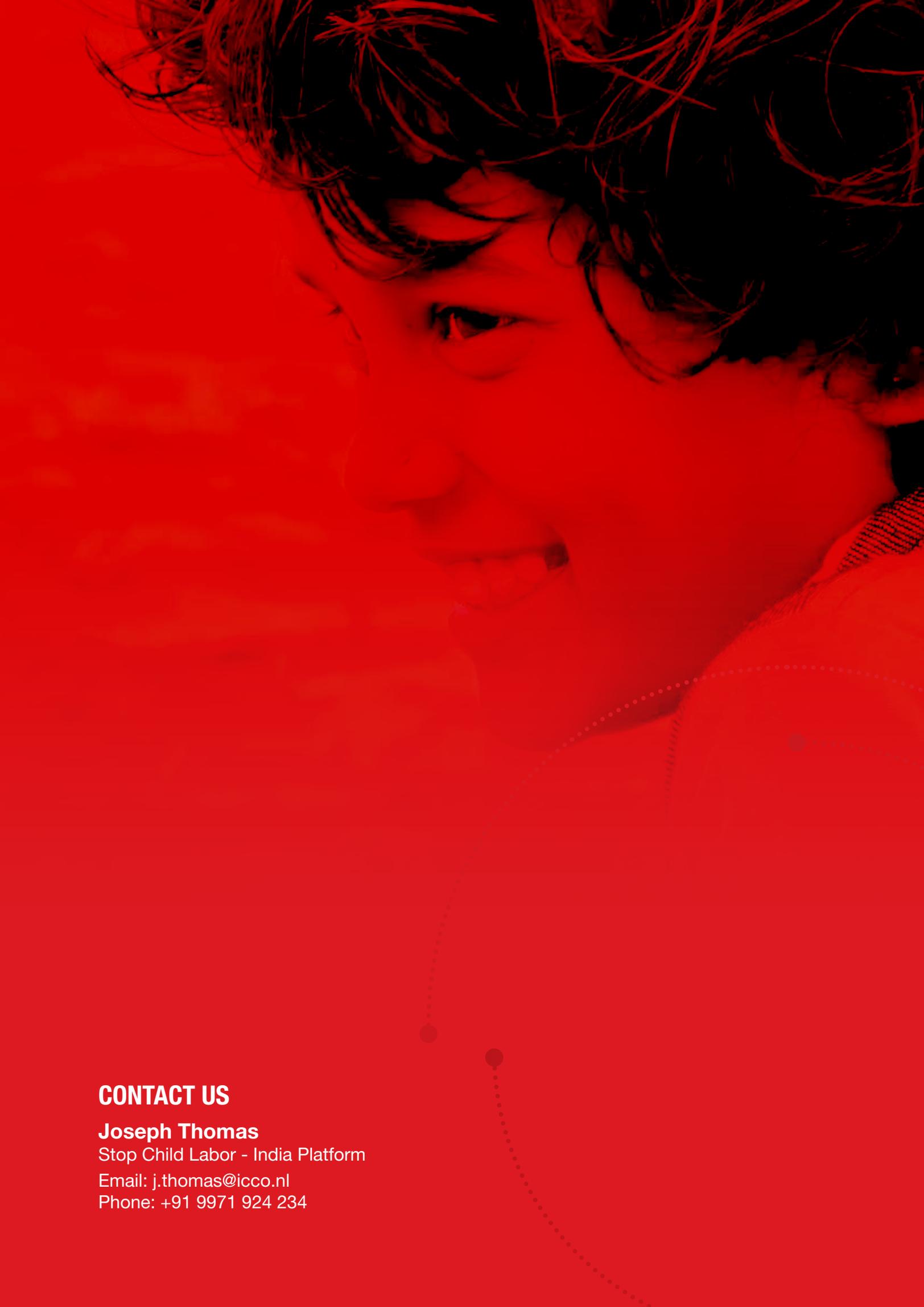
68 years old Duraiswamy is a man of integrity. He owns a general store in Tirupur and has been in the business for over 50 years now. He is also a respected leader of the area for his unwavering stance on sensitive issues like child labor and girls education. His peers too lean on his wisdom, courage, and experience to take market based decisions. All these strong leadership skills have earned him the position of a leader of District level merchants association.

Duriaswamy employs five helpers in his general store but he has always been careful not to engage children for the job. On asking him about the cost/benefit ratio of employing children over adults, he reasoned that he did not see any benefit in employing children as they take time to grasp things properly and are not physically ready to meet all the work demands. Giving a humanitarian perspective, he feels it is absolutely wrong to engage children at work as it destroys their childhood and study days and restricts their overall development. Interestingly, Duraiswamy himself has never been to school. "I belong to a merchant family and thus was never encouraged to study. Since I myself could not pursue education, I am determined to ensure that all the children in my area go to school regularly" exclaims Duraiswamy. He has two children, a son and a daughter, who have already completed their formal education and are doing well in their careers.

Duraiswamy candidly shared that with the Stop Child Labor program, there is more teeth to the good work that organizations like SAVE and Merchant's Association are collectively doing to establish Child Labor Free Zones in Tirupur. He also elaborated that the association is very strict on its stand towards child labor and therefore warns all the shopkeepers to not employ any child in their work. They also try to find children who are working as child labourers, find out the reasons for their involvement and help them to mainstream into formal education. The association collectively feels that education is the backbone of civilized human behaviour and that they would like their area to be a dwelling place for a civilized generation and this is possible only through education.







## **CONTACT US**

**Joseph Thomas**

Stop Child Labor - India Platform

Email: [j.thomas@icco.nl](mailto:j.thomas@icco.nl)

Phone: +91 9971 924 234