



# Communities and the private sector join hands to address child labour (Zambia)



International  
Labour  
Organization

## BACKGROUND

Livingstone District has one of the highest HIV prevalence rates in Zambia (estimated at 31.5%). Children are the most affected by HIV/AIDS. Many children are left to fend for themselves, often due to the death of their parents from AIDS. A major consequence of this is that children are forced into child labour at the expense of going to school. It has also been observed that extended families can be overwhelmed by the sheer number of orphans to be cared for. All of these factors increase the general poverty levels in the community, making it difficult to break the cycle of poverty and HIV/AIDS.

Given this background, the Livingstone Anglican Children's Project (LACP), in its child labour action programme begun in November 2009, has embarked on strengthening district, community and project structures to address child labour. This has bolstered community participation in the programme. LACP has also launched innovative initiatives to support care givers through private partnerships, and the introduction of driving skills as a new training area for children withdrawn from child labour.

## ACTION

Realising that no community programme can succeed without the use of community members, LACP strengthened its own structure and created and encouraged the development of the community child labour committees. After putting the structures in place, training was conducted to support them in their role.

During the training sessions, it was discussed among the participants how to best save resources in order to sustain the programme. The beneficiaries agreed on the idea of depositing money in the bank on a regular basis, and all walked home from the training session in order to use their transportation allowance to open the bank accounts.

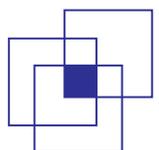
LACP approached a local bank to request a special savings facility to be accorded to the adult beneficiaries of the programme. A letter was also sent to the bank, informing them about the vision of the group and explaining that the bank's current financial services offered were not accessible for small businesses. Through discussion regarding corporate social responsibility and through commendable negotiation, an agreement was made for a savings scheme for the target beneficiaries of the income generating activities group.

## ACHIEVEMENTS/ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The structures created and those strengthened have facilitated community participation in the programme, and through them the message of the importance of children's education is being spread in the communities. The affected local communities actively participate in the programme activities; they were involved in the identification of beneficiaries, conducted community awareness programmes, and participate in the ongoing programme-update meetings.

A suitable financial product was also created for the target beneficiaries. The banks agreed to offer savings accounts with no ledger fees and, for all accounts opened through LACP, to pay for the photos needed to open one. The savings scheme with a local bank is an innovative measure for supporting family and community livelihoods.

Good practice



## **SUSTAINABILITY**

Based on the involvement and engagement of the local communities and authorities, there is evident ownership of the process and an interest in longer-term benefits for the beneficiaries.

The opportunity explored with the private sector (i.e. the bank) to indirectly support children's education and welfare is praiseworthy. This is an important intervention for both prevention and withdrawal of children from child labour and is a good example of working with local institutions to support child labour programmes. Considering the challenge of maintaining support for children's education without external assistance, the savings scheme was a valuable development that will go a long way in contributing to the sustainability of the project and supporting children's education after the conclusion of the action programme.

## **LESSONS LEARNED**

Meaningful involvement of communities is always important, not only when there is a particular event related to a programme. In this way, the communities themselves are part and parcel of the programme, and it will be easier for them to continue with the initiative after external support has been withdrawn. District and community child labour committees that make community members leaders in the process of intervention are especially helpful.

Negotiation skills are vital when dealing with the corporate world. They would like to see how the issue benefits them even as they meet the needs of the community.

Both the community and corporate world would like to know clear and realistic goals of what you are doing in order for them to support the initiative. Ideas with unclear goals are not easily supported.

## **NECESSARY CONDITIONS**

The need to be ample consultation with the participating communities and an effort to involve them right from the programme planning stage. If you are making decisions that affect people or need their input and participation, they should be involved both in the process and in the decision making. In this way, collaboration can be established or strengthened to ensure ownership of initiatives and sustainable results. Involving people with passion for the goals and objectives can also go a long way towards a successful and sustainable project. The stakeholders need to realize that what you want to achieve is meaningful.

Sharing information with key partners is another important strategy. It creates an understanding of the issue of child labour. It also contributes to the identification of means of assistance, which facilitate resource mobilisation and extended partnerships.

Corporations need to understand both the positive (increased economic growth and future business) and negative (damage to their corporate image, danger of an uneducated society) effects of supporting the initiative.

Developing a good relationship with the private sector is essential (in the case of LACP, holding an account with the same bank opened the door to the creation of a savings scheme for the beneficiaries).

A good track record is the key in working with disadvantaged communities. Communities sometimes feel that organisations make promises that do not materialise and as a result are suspicious of people coming from outside the community. LACP has developed good community structures and the community has a history of successful interventions.

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