

ILO, WFP and UNICEF Celebrate the World Day against Child Labour

Saqyet Al Sawy Cultural Center in Zamalek

Tuesday, 1st of June 2010

The “Combating Exploitative Child Labor through Education in Egypt project (CCLP)”, funded by the US Department of Labour (USDOL), implemented by the WFP and its partners the UNICEF and ILO along with its beneficiaries joined forces to cover approximately 10,599 children in three of the most vulnerable governorates in Egypt; catering around 5000 in Assuit, 2500 in Beni Suef and 2500 in Sohag through local partner Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Community Development Associations (CDAs). The project’s immediate objective is to withdraw 4,300 child workers and prevent 6,000 children at risk from exploitative child labor through formal and non-formal education in the Upper Egypt governorates. Currently the Project succeeded to prevent 7,319: 3,669 boys, 3,650 girls and withdrew 3,280: 1,311 boys, 1,969 girls.

Funding for this activity was provided by the United States Department of Labor under Cooperative Agreement number E-9-K-6-0115.

ILO was pleased to join hands with the WFP to celebrate the 12th of June **World Day against Child Labour that took place on Tuesday, 1st of June 2010 at Saqyet Al Sawy Cultural Center in Zamalek.**

Welcome and Introduction

Mr. Mohamed El Sawy, Founder of El Sawy Culture wheel took the stand to give the welcoming note and to trigger the start of the WDAEL event with a clear message to battle and combat child labour. He began by introducing the VIP guests and the invitees that came as a sign of collaboration and cooperation to support the abolition of the child labour phenomena or in other words 'the reality' in Egypt.

Master of Ceremony

Mr. Khaled Aboul Naga, UNICEF Ambassador of Good Will, took charge were he then invited both ILO and WFP directors on stage. Mr. Aboul Naga was appointed as the UNICEF Ambassador in 2007, with already an outstanding resume of humanitarian activities even before his UNICEF UN post. Throughout his involvement as an Ambassador, Mr. Aboul Naga addressed several Taboo issues affecting children in Egypt including HIV/AIDS, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Child Rights, street children and adolescents’ development.

During the WDAEL event Mr. Aboul Naga engaged in 'Q&As' with the mothers of the beneficiaries which were fruitful and enlightening as they allowed interactivity and exchange of experiences of their present status and the changes they encounter as a result of the project's

interventions and support. It started with the 'Get Ahead' package questions concerning the '5 Ps' of the Marketing mix elements; Promotion, Price, Place, Person and Product. He then moved on to the 'Game of Rights' where a number of drawings and pictures were presented on the screens in the event while children had the opportunity to discuss their rights. Such rights included the right to learn, of equality, rights as a disabled child, honorable life, to play, of health insurance and care.

Presenting the Day

Being responsible of 'Mastering the Ceremony', Mr. Aboul Naga invited Dr. Yousef Qaryouti, Director, International Labour Organization Decent Work Support Team in Cairo to speak about the WDACL. Dr. Qaryouti began by describing the venue that took place in the heart of Cairo, El Sawy Culture wheel, being a cultural center laying on a 5,000 m² right under the 15th of May bridge on the Zamalek island. The speech then pointed out the ILO's Convention No. 182 and the millions of child labourers who have benefited from the Convention's drive against practices such as the use of children in slavery, forced labour, trafficking, debt bondage, serfdom, prostitution, pornography, forced or compulsory recruitment for armed conflict and all forms of work that are likely to harm the safety, health or morals of children. Dr. Qaryouti also added that ILO is pleased to join hands with the WFP and the partners, allies and beneficiaries in the WDACL aiming to promote awareness and action to tackle child labour. He then suggested the challenges we are willing to face are to continue tackling the Worst Forms of Child Labour, scaling up efforts through poverty reduction, social protection and education, building political and popular commitment to tackling child labour and sustain the sincere cooperation and collaboration.

Launching the Event

Mr. GianPietro Bordignon, WFP Representative and Country Director was then requested to instigate the event by giving the invitees a brief about the three plays that were performed by Assiut, Sohag and Beni Suef NGO partners. Mr. Bordignon then promoted that CCLP's challenge is to break this cycle where poor families rely on the contribution that a child's earnings bring because of inadequate family income that may be unable to afford direct or indirect costs associated with family poverty which is a central part of the strategy to tackle child labour. Other challenges faced include finalizing of the National Action Plan, meeting definition of total withdrawal, mainstreaming of the Child Labour Monitoring System, keeping children within the system and a full operation and reliability of the Child Tracking System database (CTS).

An Overemotional play by Assiut

Terre des Hommes NGO in Assiut held an exceptional play during the event that brought tears as well as joy to almost all attendees. The setting of the play was located in a classroom with the main character Amr who gets questioned for being absent. Amr's response was complete acknowledgment of his common absence due to his busy schedule of working in the farm to

bring income to his family. The teacher accuses his father of his wrongfulness but Amr's father, supported by a log to be able to walk, refuses to admit he's mistaken.

At the farm, Amr and the children working there engage in a conversation about their dream professions. The illiterate children daydream of becoming waiters at local cafeterias while Amr the educated fantasize of being an engineer or a teacher. When the farm's owner suspects them talking he approaches them violently and aggressively. Although Amr's father is convinced he has no other option but to make Amr work, he still insists that the wage he obtains is below the minimum level. Amr tries constantly to convince his father that if he gets educated and becomes an Agricultural Engineer he will benefit his father a lot and bring more income to the family.

A Sentimental play by Sohag

Sohag Community Development Association for Women and Child Improvement (SCDAWCI) apprehended an outstanding performance that made attendees dazzled and overwhelmed. Under the title of 'Hakamat El Tefoula Hodoryan' or 'The Children are Sentencing', the play is composed of three different sketches in court all calling for the same objective through victimizing the children against their parents on trial.

The first sketch involves Allam whose father insists on him leaving school and engaging in work by casing farms with harmful pesticides that affect Allam's health in a hazardous manner. The second sketch talks about Mazlouma's dream of going to school while being inspired by her friend Masria's path in education. The third sketch presents the life of Belia who works at a car workshop and accidentally hurts himself with no interest from his boss to heal him. Belia also is seen listening attentively to his friend talking to him about his adventures in education. At the end of the play the judge puts their parents on trial and assesses their decision towards their children's circumstances. The play ends with a song sang by the children from Sohag calling for indulging themselves in serious roles that accompany their age instead of continuously being the victim in their lives.

Beni Suef & the Simsim family member

The Beni Suef children with the help of Amm Hussein, one of the Egyptian Alam Simsim family members, perform a play on child rights and the importance of education. Beni Suef's play was theatrically supervised and directed by the Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services (CEOSS) partner NGO.

Comments and Remarks

HE Mrs. Aisha Abdel Hadi, Minister of Manpower and Migration, initiated the speech by applauding Egypt's First Lady H.E. Mrs. Suzanne Mubarak for her efforts promoting child

welfare as her top priority were initially the Red Card campaign against child labour triggered and generated the CCLP which was originated under her Excellency's auspices.

The Minister then thanked HE Ambassador Moshira Khattab, State Minister for Family and Population, due to her genuine efforts in the amendments of the Child Labour Law. Moreover, HE then expressed being excessively impressed by the children from Upper Egypt's governorates' pleasant theatrical talents and aptitudes. HE was especially appreciative of the work done by the UN agencies' coalition and alliance for the greater good towards the aggressive abolition of child labour in Egypt were she particularly thanked the NGOs and the civil society's great role, furthermore, the CCLP's team with the proficient supervision and qualified guidance of the Project Director.

Open discussion

Support for the WDACL has been growing each year. In 2010 the CCLP experienced a World Day that is widely supported by governments, employers and workers organizations, UN agencies and all those concerned with tackling child labour. After the accomplishment and victory felt as a result of the event, the CCLP team is looking forward to phase II based on national priorities resulted from the new survey on the phenomenon.

Advocacy support

The WDACL event underwent an extensive media coverage organized by the Media and Communication department at the ILO. National TV coverage was attended by the Nile TV, Dream TV and News Sector stations. In addition, the journalists were from the Al Ahram, Nahdet Masr and other local Egyptian newspapers. For more information kindly refer to the attached press release, 3-page summary and the roll-up developed as per ILO/IPEC guidance and published material.

The invitee list

The Cairo offices of the ILO and WFP had the pleasure to cordially invite guests to the WDACL event. Invitees included Undersecretaries and Advisors to the Egyptian Ministries, Governorate officials from the three partner governorates and civil society, Specialists and Directors from UN agencies, members of the Tripartite Committee, high level representatives at the Arab League, and managers and Vice Presidents in the private sector.