

# **Strategy for USAID/Brazil's Child Labor/Education Initiative**

**USAID/Brazil**

**June 23, 2000**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Since 1994 USAID/Brazil has been pursuing its Special Objective, “Improved ability of at-risk youth to become productive, healthy citizens,” through the POMMAR project (“*ProvenHvo Orientada aos Meninos e Meninas em Situacao de Risco*,” English: Prevention Oriented Towards At-Risk Boys and Girls). The project originally focused on three cities in Brazil’s economically disadvantaged Northeast region, Fortaleza (Ceara State), Recife (Pernambuco State), and Salvador (Bahia State) but has since added Brasilia, the capital of Brazil, as a fourth city in its sphere of operations. Defining “at-risk youth” as “Children who are separated from appropriate family/parent-like care and protection, or are at risk of becoming separated,” the project has the following major foci: protection and rights, vocational training, health, and participation by youth in policy and programs (denominated *protagonismo* in Portuguese). Within these four strategic areas, the POMMAR project has developed and supported myriad creative and innovative initiatives to mitigate the dangers and disadvantages faced by at-risk youth.

As USAID/Brazil’s at-risk youth program enters its sixth year, the Mission seeks to broaden the purview of its inputs to include child labor in light of the magnitude of child labor in Brazil and the natural synergies addressing the problem will have with its current portfolio. For FY2000, the US Congress has earmarked funds for child labor to USAID, a portion of which has been allocated to the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) Bureau for combating child labor in that region. Additionally, funds have been provided to the Global Bureau to provide technical assistance and support for child labor initiatives implemented by the regional bureaus, which will be provided through the Basic Education and Policy Support (BEPS) project. USAID/Brazil has expressed interest in designing and implementing a child labor initiative with the use of the funds allocated to the LAC region, and this document outlines a strategy around which to design that initiative. The strategy will be developed with a view to integrating potential inputs from the BEPS project, particularly in the areas of technical assistance to the program that is designed to implement the strategy, and these potential linkages will be noted throughout.

## **BACKGROUND AND GENERAL PARAMETERS**

Brazil is a country of considerable diversity and contrasts. Improving social and economic indicators mask strikingly uneven development throughout different regions of the country as considerable income and wealth are concentrated in the hands of a narrow segment of the population (approximately 10% of the country’s population has 46% of the total income), and racial and gender discrimination subject millions of children and their families to economic, social, and personal marginalization including lack of access to education and health services. According to 1997 data, 23.6% of the Brazilian population (approximately 39 million people, including 21 million children) were living below the poverty level on less than US\$1 a day. As a result of this deprivation and the threat it poses to survival, many families have little choice but to place their underage children in work situations. (The current minimum age of legal employment is 16.)

Until the early 1990's, although considered illegal, child labor was tolerated in Brazil, and strategies to combat the problem centered on creating alternative programs to generate income for children and training adolescents to enter the job market in positions that for the most part did not generate a reasonable level of income. Prior to this, starting in the 1980's, efforts had been made to eradicate the most hazardous and abusive forms of child labor and to protect working adolescents. Paralleling these initiatives were efforts to promote the rights of children, including approval of the 1988 Federal Constitution that established a new paradigm of assistance to children and youth, and ratification of the 1990 Children and Adolescents Act that included a new definition of childhood and an extension of citizen's rights to young children and adolescents. More recently, the Government of Brazil signed the ILO 138 and 182 Conventions on child labor which set a minimum working age of 15 and ban the most egregious forms of child labor such as sexual exploitation and pornography, drug trafficking, and work which, by its very nature, causes damage to the health, security, or self-esteem of the child.

However, despite these positive developments, current data suggest that approximately 4.5 million children and adolescents (ages 5 to 15) are engaged in labor, with upwards of 870,000 of that number involved in hazardous and abusive labor situations. According to the Labor Ministry, the sectors with the highest child labor rates are citrus crops, salt mills, distribution and sales of newspapers, pottery making, sisal and sugar cane cutting, work in quarries, and domestic work. Lack of access to the education system, poverty, and domestic violence and abuse are the leading causes of the early insertion of Brazilian children into the labor market.

Data published in 1997 by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics revealed that the Northeastern part of the country has a disproportionate number of underage working children—34% of all children and adolescents (ages 10-14) working in urban areas and 59% of all children working in rural areas. The same survey suggested that the majority of the underage working population in urban areas is concentrated in the more difficult to identify and verify informal labor sector (including prostitution, garbage picking, and domestic work), suggesting the figures are most likely even higher. To a large extent hidden and “invisible,” these children in the informal labor sector work long hours under often hazardous and abusive conditions. And, unfortunately for these urban children, the bulk of government programs and interventions are concentrated in rural areas, with responsibility for assistance to working children and youth in urban areas left primarily to civil society and NGOs.

The impact of child labor on progress in education in Brazil has been significant, accounting in part for comparatively low school enrolment levels, high repetition and dropout rates, and a high rate of illiteracy among children and youth. Current research suggests that of every 100 children enrolled in primary school in 1997, only 66 will continue to the eighth grade. Although dropout and repetition rates have declined in recent years, data released in 1999 show persistently high rates of repetition (11.5% nationwide and 15.5% in the Northeast) and dropout (10.8% nationwide and 16.2% in the Northeast). Insufficient attention to teacher training, to the provision of learning materials, and to creating a physical environment conducive to learning in schools complete the grim litany.

Given the complex nature of the causes of child labor in Brazil, the magnitude of the problem, and the range of possible approaches to addressing the constitutive issues, some parameters need to be established within which to develop the strategy. These parameters will be as follows:

- The focus will be on the informal labor sector in urban areas that are considered to be the most hazardous and abusive, including child prostitutes, garbage pickers, street vendors, and domestic servants. These forms of child labor have historically received less attention in Brazil due perhaps to their relatively transient and “hidden” nature, and therefore represent a high priority in terms of the need for intervention .
- In order to integrate the implementation of the child labor strategy with USAID’s ongoing work with at-risk youth and to benefit from the presence and “infrastructure” USAID already has in place, the strategy will focus on the major urban areas in the Northeast region of Brazil: Fortaleza, Recife, and Salvador. This geographical alignment, and the direct linkages with POMMAR that it will enable, will facilitate effective implementation of the strategy.
- Inasmuch as education is inextricably linked to the problem of child labor, the centerpiece of the strategy will be making basic education available to children in labor situations, both as a rehabilitative and preventive measure, and supplementing that with complementary, after-school education activities. Improving the quality of both formal and non-formal education will also be a major focus of the strategy, as will be strengthening the linkages between the two.
- At the same time, however, because education is but one element in a complex nexus of inputs and solutions to combat child labor, the strategy will also encompass other ancillary elements like addressing parental and family concerns, supporting the formation of national and local policies, and strengthening the integration, coordination, and implementation of existing initiatives in child labor so that the strategy is holistic and systemic.
- The implementation of the strategy will be based on working with local organizations that are established, respected, well-positioned to take timely action, and have expressed a willingness to collaborate with USAID. Moreover, it will seek to build upon existing expertise and to develop synergies with organizations engaged in similar activities.
- The strategy will take into account the possibility of taking various program components and models to scale both within Brazil and in the LAC region, and will aim to incorporate mechanisms that facilitate sustainability.

## **CURRENT RESPONSES TO CHILD LABOR AND EXISTING NEEDS**

As stated previously, the Government of Brazil has made significant strides in recent years to address the problem of child labor. It has adopted the major ILO Conventions on child labor and has articulated numerous domestic policies to remove underage children from labor situations. At the national level, the National Forum for Child Labor Eradication, comprised of 43 members including relevant government departments, national NGOs, and international organizations, has

been established in Brasilia to develop guidance for the elaboration and implementation of national policies to combat child labor. On a decentralized basis, similar State Forums for the eradication of child labor, comprised of state government representatives, local NGOs, and other players at the local level, have been established to respond to child labor issues and problems identified at the municipal and community levels, and to coordinate and integrate initiatives being implemented by local authorities and organizations. In addition, a plethora of creative and innovative programs addressing the needs of at-risk youth are being implemented on the ground.

Despite the promising nature of policies and structures in place to address child labor and the innovative nature of programs being implemented to eliminate the problem at the national, state, and local levels, significant gaps and needs are manifest which, if not addressed, will continue to dilute the impact of current and future efforts to combat child labor. These gaps and needs include the following:

First, there is a serious lack of consistent and reliable data about child labor in Brazil. A number of studies have been conducted in recent years by different government agencies and national and international organizations, but the findings are often inconsistent and even contradictory. This being the case, there is no reliable basis upon which to design and implement programs and to deploy resources in a manner that is strategically appropriate. Beyond this, most research to date has focused on the more easily identifiable formal labor sectors in the economy; therefore, in order to remove underage children from the more hidden and “invisible” forms of labor in the informal sector, which are often the most cynical and abusive, and to place them in school, more relevant data are required.

Second, although progress is being made in providing greater access to basic education, many children remain excluded from the formal school system due to the high costs of schooling (for uniforms, books, learning materials and, in some cases, tuition) or because the opportunity cost of their attending school is too onerous for their families. Complementary, after-school education activities, while an essential component of a strategy to keep underage children out of working situations, are made available to a relatively few number of children, and are not closely linked to the formal school system, comprising in some instances a parallel school system that is in competition with the public schools.

Third, although the well-known scholarship program (*Bolsa Escola*), currently being implemented in several different forms across the country, is proving effective in removing children from work and placing them in schools, it is at best a temporary bridging mechanism that must be supplemented with opportunities for parents and families to rise above poverty and to reduce their dependence on scholarships. To date, little attention has been focused on this dimension of what must be a holistic approach in order to solve the vexing problem of child labor.

Fourth, despite the existence of many organizations and NGOs operating at the local level, there is no single organization or NGO in any of the three states targeted in this strategy that deals with child labor in a frontal, substantive manner; instead, they all deal with child labor in a tangential way, for example, addressing legal advocacy for victims of sexual abuse and providing vocational education for adolescents who are of legal working age. In the absence of an

organization in each region with solid expertise in child labor and the capacity to manage multiple child labor inputs, it is difficult to envision mounting substantive programs in child labor that address the problem directly and that effectively integrate the educational inputs that occupy center stage in this strategy. Of particular concern is organizations' relative lack of effective monitoring and evaluation systems to track the progress of program interventions and to assess intended outcomes.

Fifth, the coordinating body of the National Forum, currently comprised of only two people, is stretched to the limit in terms its ability to fulfill its responsibilities which are steadily increasing due to the higher profile the issue of child labor is receiving in Brazil; moreover, it is anticipating a reduction in its operating budget, which will further threaten its viability. Similarly, while the capacity of the State Forums is variable, most are in a nascent stage of development, are characterized by mistrust among members and, as a result, are not realizing the potential they have to coordinate and integrate child labor policies and programs at the state and local levels. Although many programs and initiatives are being implemented at the local level, at present they are largely piecemeal and fragmented, and do not constitute a coherent and integrated response to child labor.

The comparative advantage and value-added of USAID's involvement in child labor in Brazil will therefore reside in devising and implementing a strategy that addresses these major gaps and needs. Based on the preceding analysis, the following five dimensions will provide the warp for the weaving of USAID's strategy to address child labor:

- Support the planned national survey to develop baseline data on child labor in all employment sectors; develop the capacity at the state/local level to devise research methodologies to obtain baseline data on child labor in the urban informal labor sector, and support the implementation of that research. Develop the capacity to track and monitor child labor in the informal labor sector in the cities of Fortaleza, Recife, and Salvador in order to assess the impact of programmatic inputs to implement the strategy.
- Support and strengthen basic education and complementary non-formal education activities to remove and rehabilitate underage children who are presently working and not in school, and to prevent underage children from entering or re-entering labor situations.
- Strengthen existing support structures for families receiving education scholarships and develop new mechanisms for providing alternative income generation opportunities (and requisite skill training as necessary) so that scholarships are a temporary bridging mechanism instead of a long-term fixture in combating child labor.
- Increase the capacity for addressing child labor in the three targeted areas through strengthening and supporting one organization in each state to be the vanguard in the struggle against child labor in that state and the organization primarily responsible for implementing and managing USAID's inputs at the state and local levels.
- Enhance the coordination and integration of child labor policies and their implementation at the national, state, and local levels to better support the proposed educational inputs.

The strategy, therefore, will exemplify a multi-pronged approach that is integrated and holistic: it will start with obtaining reliable data, employ educational approaches to extracting children from abusive labor situations and preventing their return to that work, provide support to families in a manner that addresses their financial as well as personal and social needs, strengthen the capacity at the state and local levels to address needs and deliver services, and strengthen and integrate the structures that undergird the fight against child labor. Thus the strategy and its implementation will be systemic in nature, an effective model that can be effectively replicated in other areas of Brazil should additional funds for child labor be made available in the future.

## **STRATEGY, DESIRED RESULTS, AND ILLUSTRATIVE SUPPORTING ACTIONS**

Although tackling child labor, as described above, requires adopting an integrated approach, for the sake of clarity, the different levels on which the strategy operates will be demarcated according to national, state, and local whenever relevant. Moreover, to define the contours for implementing the strategy, the desired results and illustrative supporting actions will be described for each of the five dimensions of the strategy.

- 1. Support the planned national survey to develop baseline data on child labor in all employment sectors; develop the capacity at the state/local level to devise research methodologies to obtain baseline data on child labor in the urban informal labor sector, and support the implementation of that research. Develop the capacity to track and monitor child labor in the informal labor sector in the cities of Fortaleza, Recife, and Salvador in order to assess the impact of programmatic inputs to implement the strategy.**

In order to articulate relevant policies, to develop and implement responsive programs, and to assess impact over time, accurate baseline data regarding child labor in Brazil is required. As observed previously, presently data on child labor in various sectors of the economy and in different geographical regions are incomplete, fragmented, and often contradictory. Partially due to this, it is difficult for the Brazilian government to develop appropriate policies, to design and implement effective child labor initiatives, and to track over time the impact the policies and programs that are implemented are having on reducing child labor. For this reason, the first dimension of USAID's strategy will address this important reality, at both the national and state/local levels.

### National Level

Presently, planning is underway, spearheaded by the Government by Brazil with the assistance of major organizations and donors like ILO, UNICEF, the World Bank, and the US (through funding to IPEC), to conduct a comprehensive national survey to obtain baseline data on child labor in different sectors of the economy and geographical regions. Having reliable and consistent data in hand will enable the government to formulate effective policies and to direct its investments for combating child labor in a informed, strategic fashion. While it is likely that the survey will concentrate on the more easily identifiable segments of child labor in formal industries and businesses in the economy, the research is important for the long-term struggle

against child labor in Brazil. And, as an important player in the development arena in Brazil, it will be important for USAID to support this initiative.

***Desired Results:***

- Accurate and reliable baseline data on child labor obtained at the national level so that the Government of Brazil can articulate and adopt appropriate policies and design and mount effective programs to eradicate child labor. (A further result of supporting this initiative is that, if additional funding for child labor is made available to USAID in the future, the Mission will benefit from the data obtained from this research in planning and implementing further projects and initiatives.)

***Illustrative Supporting Actions:***

- (1) Because the Mission was recently admitted as a member of the National Forum, it is in a position to be directly and substantively involved in combating child labor at the national level. USAID/Brazil's input in the national research initiative will take the form of active participation in the National Forum, of which the ILO and UNICEF are also members and, as appropriate, through technical assistance, potentially via the Global Bureau/BEPS project.

State/Local Levels

The national survey on child labor is likely to focus primarily on the formal labor sector, will most likely be conducted through traditional survey methods which are of doubtful utility in identifying children in the urban informal labor sector who are often inaccessible and somewhat "invisible," and compiling and disseminating the results of the survey is likely to be a lengthy process. Therefore, the capacity to design appropriate research methods for identifying child labor targeted by the USAID strategy, and the capacity to conduct the data collection in Fortaleza, Recife, and Salvador and to track and monitor child labor over time in the informal sector will be developed as part of the present strategy.

***Desired Results:***

- Capacity developed at the state/locals level in the targeted three states to design and implement research to obtain baseline data on child labor in the informal urban labor sector utilizing participatory methodologies, including data collection by peers of children in labor situations.
- Reliable data on child labor in the informal labor sector in the three targeted urban areas obtained.
- Capacity developed to track and monitor child labor in sectors in targeted urban areas and, on a phased in basis, to link that data with data bases at the national level.

***Illustrative Supporting Actions:***

- (1) Three local organizations (one in each targeted state) which are best positioned to become

the lead organization in combating child labor in their respective states, have expressed interest and willingness to be the focal point for developing the capacity for designing research methodologies, conducting the research, and maintaining data bases for child labor in the urban informal labor sector in their state. The three organizations are CEDECA in Ceara and Bahia, and CENDHEC in Pernambuco. (See #4 below for a description of the organizations.)

These organizations, working with the NGO Missao Crianca (“Child Mission,” the organization primarily responsible for implementing the scholarship program—see #2 below) and with other interested and capable organizations—for example, the Abrinq Foundation which intends to expand its sphere of operations to include the informal labor sector in the Northeast, and UNICEF, which is working with domestic workers in Salvador and with garbage pickers in Recife—will comprise the research group in each state.

- (2) The three research groups, through technical assistance from the BEPS project, will be trained in participatory research methods that are appropriate for collecting the required data. In this workshop, the research groups will develop the research instruments and, subsequently, the research instruments will be pilot-tested in each city and finalized for the actual data collection process. The data will then be collected in the three cities.
- (3) A separate training course, also conducted with technical assistance from BEPS if no local consultants can be identified, will be provided to the research groups on how to maintain data bases and how to track and monitor child labor in the cities in their state on an ongoing basis. Over time, information from these data bases will be fed into a national data base for use at the national level. (For more on the monitoring and evaluation aspect of the strategy, see dimension #4 on strengthening the three lead organizations in each state.)

## **2. Support and strengthen basic education and complementary non-formal education activities to remove and rehabilitate underage children who are presently working and not in school, and to prevent underage children from entering or re-entering labor situations.**

A sound strategy to combat child labor incorporates both rehabilitative and preventive measures. When children in the urban informal labor sector in Fortaleza, Recife, and Salvador have been identified through the research process described previously, efforts will be made to remove them from work and to place them in school. At present, the primary mechanism for doing this is the scholarship program (*Bolsa Escola*) which is being implemented in many regions of Brazil by state governments, the national government (the PETI program), and the NGO, Missao Crianca. Although each variant of the scholarship program has unique features, they all aim to offset the opportunity cost of children attending school through the provision of monthly stipends to families who remove their children from work (or who are too poor to send their children to school) and place them in school. (The stipend in the Missao Crianca model is one-half of the minimum wage per month, approximately US\$40.)

The provision of financial incentives such as scholarship stipends to parents as a way to enroll their children in school is controversial and therefore requires justification as part of the USAID

strategy. Critics of such initiatives argue that the provision of incentives creates dependency, can have the deleterious effect of encouraging parents to remove their children from school and to put them to work so that they receive a stipend for re-inserting their children into school, and represent an approach that is not sustainable over the long term.

Despite these potential pitfalls, at present there is a strong consensus in Brazil that, in light of the economic turmoil the country recently experienced and the resulting even heavier burden poor families now shoulder, the provision of financial incentives is imperative at this juncture of Brazil's development in order to educate as broad a segment of the population as possible. The scholarships are further viewed as a much needed (albeit modest) mechanism for improving equity in Brazilian society through the redistribution of resources that have fallen even further out of balance as a result of the recent economic downturn. Therefore, as a short-term bridge to facilitate the development process until longer-term policies begin to take effect, the scholarship program is justified and warrants a place in USAID's strategy for combating child labor through education.

Of the variants of the scholarship program currently being implemented, the Missao Crianca model will be employed in USAID's strategy. There are several reasons for this. The main reason is that, more than the other scholarship programs, Missao Crianca adopts an integrated and holistic approach to encouraging parents to send their children to school: Community members monitor the attendance of children in school, which strengthens school-community relations. The local NGOs implementing the program provide training for teachers and school administrators in order to improve the quality of the schools into which the children are placed, thereby allaying parents' concerns about the value of sending their children to school. Moreover, the implementers of the program at the local level meet monthly with parents (usually the mothers) to review the progress of the children and to problem solve if issues have arisen and, not only are parents required to send all their children to school in order to receive the monthly stipend, they must also submit their children to monthly health check-ups so that their children's attendance in school is regular and the health of the family in general is improved. Finally, illiterate parents receive training in basic literacy and numeracy so they are able to better assist and support their children educationally. As such, the scholarship program incorporated in this strategy ranges well beyond the mere provision of a financial incentive to entice parents to send their children to school; it is an integral part of a holistic response to child labor and the exclusion of children from basic education.

There are several other reasons why the Missao Crianca model is incorporated in the present strategy. First, Missao Crianca has agreed to be a member of the research group (described above in #1) in each targeted state to ensure that the provision of scholarships is directly linked to those children identified in the informal labor sector in each city. Second, Missao Crianca is eager to receive technical assistance to improve the teacher and school administrator training dimension of its model as a way to enhance the quality of education children receive and to improve retention. Third, because it is an NGO, Missao Crianca is able to provide scholarships on the basis of genuine need and is not beholden to the political agendas and pressures to which the other scholarship programs are often subjected. Fourth, the government PETI scholarship program is implemented mainly in rural areas and largely ignores the urban areas, whereas Missao Crianca will implement its scholarship program according to the wishes of its sponsors.

And, fifth, all local NGOs implementing Missao Crianca's scholarship program must be members of the state child labor Forum in that locality, which will reinforce other dimensions of the strategy (see #5 below on the State Forums).

However, the removal of children from labor situations and placing them in school will not, in itself, assure that they do not return to work during non-school hours. At present, the length of the school day is only four hours and, for this reason, children often work during non-school hours, which compromises the impact of the learning they achieve when they are in school because they are tired and what they learn in school is not sufficiently reinforced. Consequently, while efforts are made at the national level to extend the school day from 4 to 6 hours (see #5 below on policy support), an important part of the strategy is to place the children removed from work into after-school complementary non-formal education programs.

Recently conducted studies point to art education (music, dance, drama, graphic art) as one of the most effective instruments to keep children and youth out of labor situations in Brazil, given the important role art plays in the culture, especially in the Northeast. Insofar as these programs integrate children into groups organized around interesting activities closely related to the learning process, art education programs have the potential to reinforce and extend what is learned in the formal education system. At present there are many such programs supported by POMMAR, and a number of similar programs are being implemented by state and local governments. The selection of the programs into which children withdrawn from labor situations are placed will be determined by the children's interests, the availability of places in the programs, and the geographical location of the programs vis-à-vis where the children live.

Importantly, the support provided to the complementary education programs into which the children are placed will be earmarked for strengthening the educational dimensions of the programs and for aligning them more closely with the formal school system. Currently, there is often a disconnect, even competition, between the complementary education programs and the public school system which is counterproductive. Support for the non-formal education programs, therefore, will be directed toward activities such as holding regular meetings between public school teachers and instructors of the complementary education programs to review children's progress and to problem solve as necessary, conducting joint training of public school teachers and instructors from the non-formal education programs, strengthening curriculum linkages between the two types of programs, and taking the performances of the various art education programs into the formal schools to be shared with the children there.

***Desired Results:***

- Children identified from the research initially conducted are removed from labor situations and placed in public schools with the assistance of scholarships.
- The same children are placed in relevant complementary education programs during off-school hours.
- Linkages between formal schools and non-formal education programs are strengthened for improved cohesion and enhanced educational achievement.
- The quality of schools and of families' lives is improved through supporting and strengthening all dimensions of the Missao Crianca scholarship program.

- The Missao Crianca scholarship program is evaluated, the results are documented, and steps are taken to replicate the model in other countries in Latin America.

***Illustrative Supporting Actions:***

- (1) Children in the urban informal labor sector identified in the initial research will be removed from work and placed in school, and their families will be provided a scholarship for two years by Missao Crianca. This constitutes the removal or *rehabilitation* aspect of the strategy.
- (2) Through BEPS, technical assistance will be provided to Missao Crianca to strengthen the teacher and school administrator training component of the scholarship model. Further, BEPS will support Missao Crianca's plan to evaluate its scholarship program, to document the results to date, and to disseminate and replicate the model in other countries of the LAC region.
- (3) A further potential supporting action to improve the quality of public schools and to heighten awareness about child labor issues on the part of teachers and school administrators is to contract the services of The Solidarity Center (supported by the AFL-CIO and based in Sao Paulo) to train members of the teachers union in the three targeted states. The aim would be to increase teachers' and school administrators' awareness of child labor, to give them the tools they need to address child labor issues in their classrooms and to incorporate major child labor messages in the curriculum, and to train them to be advocates about the negative effects of child labor in their schools, especially when dealing with parents.
- (4) The children removed from work will be placed in relevant after-school complementary education programs according to their interests, availability of places in the programs, and the location of the programs with regard to where they live. These might be programs currently supported by POMMAR, existing government programs, or new programs that are established by the time this phase of the strategy is ready for implementation. Potential art education and skills training programs include: Casa de Passagem (job skills training for child prostitutes) in Recife, Grupo Cultural Baguncaco (drum and dance) in Salvador, and the Tapera Art Education Project and the government-sponsored "ABC" sports and vocational training centers in Fortaleza. This supporting action is part of the *prevention* aspect of the strategy.
- (5) In order to more closely align the complementary education programs with the formal school system so that the two experiences are mutually reinforcing, support will be provided to the complementary education programs to hold regular meetings with teachers from the public schools to assess children's progress and to problem solve as issues arise, to conduct joint teacher training workshops, to forge organic linkages between the two curricula, and to further integrate the two educational inputs through displaying art products in the public schools and holding music and dance performances of the complementary programs in the public schools.

- (6) A further preventive strategy, and one that will help to finance the complementary education activities, is to support the Abrinq Foundation's "Child-Friendly Business" program. This program enlists the support of industries and businesses to eliminate child labor in all aspects of their operations, their entire "chain of production." Upon doing so, the industry or business receives a "No Child Labor" seal on its products from the Foundation and is then free of any punitive action.

The model can be applied to the informal labor sector as well: Formal businesses and their "middlemen" that utilize children working in the urban formal labor sector—for example, travel agents, airlines, and hotels who market "sex tours" that involve child prostitutes; recycling companies and intermediate businesses that purchase recyclable items from child garbage pickers; and newspaper companies and distributors who use the services of child vendors—can be prevented from doing so by utilizing Abrinq Foundation's "Child-Friendly Business" approach. This linkage with the Abrinq Foundation will ensure that the gains made in removing children from the informal labor sector will be sustainable—that is, that no "new" children will be recruited to take the place of the children who were removed from those labor situations in the first place.

- (7) Collaboration with the Abrinq Foundation will reinforce other aspects of the overall strategy: Industries and businesses that receive the "No Child Labor" seal of approval from the Foundation are required to contribute funds to an organization engaged in combating child labor, which could be an NGO or a complementary art education program. Alternatively, the businesses can make in-kind contributions, for example, providing equipment to schools or assisting the local government with teacher training. This will therefore be a mechanism whereby some of the material and programmatic inputs of the strategy are made financially sustainable.

**3. Strengthen existing support structures for families receiving education scholarships and develop new mechanisms for providing alternative income generation opportunities (and requisite skill training as necessary) so that scholarships are a temporary bridging mechanism instead of a long-term fixture in combating child labor.**

Child labor is at root an economic problem and, although removing children from labor situations and placing them in school solves the immediate problem, the gains will be tenuous and most likely short-lived unless the grinding poverty families of working children experience is alleviated. The stipend families receive from the scholarship program for placing their children in school—especially families with several school age children—is unlikely to be sufficient to sustain keeping their children in school unless their overall economic situation is improved concomitantly. For this reason, the support provided to families must go beyond the provision of a small monthly stipend (one-half the minimum wage) and the other elements of the scholarship model like regular health care check-ups and literacy training for illiterate parents, and include viable ways to increase their current income.

Therefore, an important dimension of the current strategy is the incorporation of a micro-credit program for income generation for families receiving the school scholarships. A number of successful micro-credit models exist, for example the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, and a

similar model or variant will be implemented to support the educational components of this strategy.

### National Level

Devising and implementing a strategy to incorporate micro-credit and income generation activities into the scholarship program at the local level will be most effective if it is supported at the national level and made a matter of policy. Consequently, this complement to the scholarship model will be lobbied for in Brasilia by the National Forum for Child Labor Eradication (see dimension #5 of the strategy).

### State/Local Levels

At the state and local levels, the lead child labor organization in each state, in concert with Missao Crianca and other members of the State Forum, will similarly adopt policies and plans for incorporating the micro-credit dimension into the scholarship program in their states. Moreover, linkages with banks and organizations that provide micro-credit for local level income generation will be formed, for example, the Bank of the Northeast and the National Economic and Social Development Bank (BNDES). If expertise is not presently available regarding how to effectively design and implement micro-credit programs, the expertise will be developed (see below).

#### ***Desired Results:***

- The provision of micro-credit to needy families as part of the scholarship program is adopted as policy at the national and state levels.
- In the three states targeted in this strategy, the capacity to provide micro-credit to families receiving scholarships is developed; necessary linkages with relevant banks and organizations are formed to successfully implement the income generation program.
- Needy families receive credit, and generate sufficient income so that, over time, they are no longer dependent on scholarships to keep their children out of work and in school.

#### ***Illustrative Supporting Actions:***

- (1) The capacity of the lead child labor organization in each state, together with Missao Crianca and other members of the State Forum, to design, implement, and manage an effective micro-credit scheme to complement the scholarship program will be developed. This will be done through training provided by local organizations and consultants with the requisite expertise. If such expertise is unavailable locally, the training will be provided through technical assistance from BEPS.
- (2) Linkages will be formed with banks currently involved in micro-credit schemes (e.g., Bank of the Northeast and BNDES) and funds for this purpose will be leveraged. Moreover, attempts will be made to identify and collaborate with organizations (local NGOs) that are already involved in micro-credit for income generation programs.

- (3) As part of the micro-credit program, families who are interested in participating in the program but who do not have the needed skills for effectively utilizing the credits, will be provided skills training as well as training in literacy and numeracy if needed, which will be provided by local consultants. Importantly, as much as possible, the micro-credit and training will be provided to the same families of child workers identified in the initial research who have received scholarships so that the full benefit of the multiple inputs included in the strategy is realized.
- (4) The lead child labor organization in each state (CEDECA Bahia/Ceara or CENDHEC) will establish and manage a data base of families participating in the income generation activities, and will track progress toward the productive use of the funds provided and their repayment.

**4. Increase the capacity for addressing child labor in the three targeted areas through strengthening and supporting one organization in each state to be the vanguard in the struggle against child labor in that state and the organization primarily responsible for implementing and managing USAID's inputs at the state and local levels.**

Implementing the first three dimensions of the strategy will require considerable capacity, management, and coordination at the local and state levels. However, as noted earlier, although there are several organizations in each of the targeted states operating within the broad orbit of child labor, the focus of their work is concentrated in areas like child's rights, legal advocacy, and vocational training that are more tangential to the core dimensions of child labor. Because of this, an important part of USAID's strategy will be developing the capacity of one organization in each state to be the vanguard for implementing the myriad components of the strategy. Considerable capacity building will need to be done to strengthen these organizations given the heavy burden of implementation, management, and coordination they will shoulder as described in previous sections.

Significantly, one well-established organization in each state that has been working more closely in the field of child labor than other organizations, and has been supported by POMMAR in the past, has expressed interest in expanding its mandate and capacity to take the lead role in its state. These organizations are:

- In Ceara (Fortaleza), CEDECA (Center for the Defense of Children and Adolescents), an organization dealing primarily with legal advocacy in areas of child's rights, child abuse, sexual exploitation of children and adolescents, advocacy for children denied access to education, and social mobilization and consciousness raising about children's issues in general.
- In Bahia (Salvador), the local CEDECA, with a similar mandate as its affiliate in Fortaleza.
- In Pernambuco (Recife), CENDEHC (Dom Helder Camara's Center for the Promotion of Children's Rights), which has a different name but is part of the same affiliation of organizations with the same focus as the two CEDECAs.

These three organizations will be strengthened and supported to act as the main conduit for implementing the various components of the USAID child labor strategy in their respective states, including forming a research group, developing the research instruments, carrying out the

baseline research, and maintaining a data base on child labor in the sectors identified; working closely with Missao Crianca to implement all dimensions of the scholarship model; coordinating and managing the micro-credit program for families receiving scholarships; and in general interfacing with and coordinating the inputs of other organizations collaborating to implement the strategy. Ideally, each of these organizations will also be the lead, coordinating organization of their State Forum (see #5 below on the State Forums).

A vital aspect of the institutional strengthening of the three lead organizations will be developing the capacity to establish and maintain effective monitoring and evaluation systems. In order to fine-tune interventions and to assess the impact of USAID's strategy to combat child labor, these organizations will need to maintain and update data on a number of different fronts: the number of children withdrawn from abusive and hazardous work in the informal urban labor sector; the number of children placed in schools and who received scholarships; the number of families benefiting from the scholarship program (regular meetings with teachers, health care check-ups, literacy and job skill training); and the number of families benefiting from micro-credit and income generation. Monitoring and evaluating the impact of these inputs on a regular basis will enable the lead organizations to evaluate the merits of particular program interventions and to assess the overall results and outcomes of USAID's strategy for fighting child labor.

Building the capacity of these organizations in the manner described above will not only have the short-term benefit of enabling USAID's present strategy on child labor to be effectively implemented, their enhanced expertise and capacity to combat child labor will also augur well for the long-term sustainability of child labor initiatives in general in each state.

***Desired Results:***

- One organization in each of three states, currently involved indirectly in child labor, strengthened and supported so that they have the capacity to lead and manage the implementation of USAID's strategy in their respective states, resulting in an enhanced responsiveness to dealing with the issue of child labor in each state, particularly in the targeted urban areas.
- Capacity developed for the three organizations to design and maintain effective monitoring and evaluation systems to assess the impact of program interventions so that they can be adjusted as necessary, and to evaluate the effectiveness of USAID's overall strategy to combat child labor.

***Illustrative Supporting Actions:***

The strengthening and capacity building of the three organizations will be accomplished through financial assistance and training:

- (1) Financial assistance will be provided to hire required personnel for the duration of the program to implement the strategy; these staff will most likely include a program manager and possibly a child labor specialist. Financial assistance will also be provided to help defray the additional operating expenses incurred in expanding their role, including communications, a computer, and possibly extra office space.

(2) The training provided to the three organizations (in most cases delivered jointly) will take many forms and will be conducted by local consultants and organizations or through technical assistance provided by BEPS. Training content will include:

- Developing participatory research methodologies, conducting the baseline child labor research, and maintaining tracking data bases.
- Designing, implementing, and managing a micro-credit program.
- Institutional development and general management, including the development of strategic plans and work plans and required financial management procedures (perhaps conducted by PACT or one of its affiliated organizations).
- Networking with other organizations and forming effective linkages and collaboration with other organizations, and how to leverage funding in order to become financially sustainable.
- Devising and utilizing monitoring and evaluation systems to assess the progress and impact of program inputs and to evaluate the effectiveness of USAID's overall strategy.

**5. Enhance the coordination and integration of child labor policies and their implementation at the national, state, and local levels to better support the proposed educational inputs.**

As noted in the introductory sections of this strategy, while there are a considerable number of creative and innovative programs and projects being implemented to combat child labor in Brazil, their integration and coordination is suspect in many cases, resulting in duplication, overlap, and lack of synergy. To be more responsive to the needs posed by child labor and to focus initiatives more strategically so that scarce resources are deployed to obtain the greatest impact, coordination between organizations within respective states, and the integration of inputs between the state and national levels, needs to be strengthened.

Beyond this, appropriate policies need to be proposed and adopted at the national level so that they can be implemented at the local level. In the absence of these vital child labor “infrastructures” being strengthened and rationalized, it is unlikely that the actions taken at the state and local levels will have the desired efficacy. Thus, while the other four dimensions of the strategy are being implemented, the structural mechanisms that undergird and facilitate their implementation need to be strengthened and supported.

National Level

The National Forum for Child Labor Eradication is comprised of representatives of 43 government departments, national NGOs, and international organizations and donors, USAID being the newest member. The National Forum, which meets monthly in Brasilia, is responsible for formulating policy regarding child labor and coordinating its implementation at the national level. Although the Government of Brazil has formulated and adopted many positive policies, it is well known that their implementation has been less than stellar. The National Forum, as the

body responsible for translating policy into practice in a coherent and integrated manner, thus plays a key role in eliminating child labor.

At present, the National Forum is managed by two people in an office that was recently relocated to the Ministry of Justice. While this physical move has relieved the financial burden of overseeing the work of the Forum in terms of operating costs (communications, recurrent office expenses, etc.) the amount of work significantly exceeds the capacity of two people to be done properly. Additionally, there are few funds available for technical assistance or for the costs incurred in disseminating the work of the Forum, especially against the backdrop of an expected reduction in funding for the Forum coordinating body by ILO and UNICEF. In response, the leadership of the Forum has proposed that non-government members contribute monthly dues to offset costs and, as a member, USAID/Brazil should contribute its share. Beyond this, USAID's support will include additional modest financial assistance as described below.

***Desired Results:***

- Articulation and adoption of policies at the national level that are responsive to combating child labor and which are implemented in a timely manner.
- A strengthened Forum leadership that is better able to manage Forum operations so that policies and programs are more integrated and better coordinated.
- Enhanced communication and collaboration with State Forums, leading to stronger linkages with and more effective implementation of national policies at the state level.

***Illustrative Supporting Actions:***

(1) As a formal member of the National Forum, USAID will lobby for and support the adoption of policies that will strengthen educational inputs to combat child labor; these include:

- Lengthening the public school day from 4 to 6 hours (and lobbying for the government to begin making needed preparations for the new law, including fiscal analysis, enhancing teacher training, and making required curriculum revisions).
- Bringing uniformity to the stipend amount the various scholarship models provide.
- Incorporating a micro-credit for income generation component in the scholarship program.
- Disseminating the new law raising the minimum working age from 14 to 16 which is currently widely unknown or ignored.

(2) USAID/Brazil will contribute its member dues (proposed: R\$1,000 per month) to finance the operations of the Forum, including the salaries of the full-time coordinators. If this proposed plan should be delayed or not adopted at all, financial resources will be provided as needed to keep the coordinating group functional (including the addition of a third full-time staff) until more local, sustainable funding is secured.

(3) The leadership of the National Forum has expressed interest in providing training for the State Forums in how to structure their forums along the lines of the National Forum (with relevant adaptations), how to manage and integrate the inputs from diverse groups, and how

to improve communication and coordination with the National Forum. Funds will be provided for this training, which will be attended simultaneously by representatives of the State Forums in the three targeted areas.

### State Level

The mandate of the State Forum in each state is to respond to child labor issues and needs raised by local municipal and tutelary councils, to integrate and coordinate those responses, to network with segments of society, to mobilize society against child labor, and to interface with the National Forum to carry out national policies at the state and local levels. At present the effectiveness of the State Forums is variable: In the three states included in this strategy, the State Forum in Bahia is reported to be functioning relatively well but the Forums in Ceara and Pernambuco were recently formed or are in the process of reorganization. Therefore, all are in need of strengthening and support so that they can more effectively carry out their mandates. The strengthening and support will take several forms as detailed below.

#### ***Desired Results:***

- One member organization strengthened to provide effective leadership for each State Forum (hopefully, these organizations will be the same as those who will lead the implementation of USAID's strategy, as described previously in dimension #4).
- Improved capacity of Forum members to collaborate and to reach effective decisions through participatory processes.
- Enhanced ability of the three Forums to respond to child labor issues and problems raised at the municipal and local levels.
- Improved communication and integration between the State and National Forums.

#### ***Illustrative Supporting Actions:***

- (1) In general, one member organization of the State Forum serves as the "secretariat" for the Forum and thereby adopts a leadership role. It will be fortuitous if CEDECA in Ceara and Bahia, and CENDHEC in Pernambuco are installed as the "secretariat" of their respective Forums and, therefore, this will be lobbied for. Given the inputs that will be made to these organizations, as detailed in section #4 above, they will be well positioned to adopt this leading role.
- (2) In the absence of (1) happening, funding will need to be provided to whichever other organizations play the leading role in the Forums, including funds for one full-time staff, for minimal office operations, and for mounting media campaigns, publishing, and disseminating the work of the Forums.
- (3) As described above, funds will be provided to the coordinating body of the National Forum to provide training to the three State Forums in organizational development and how to work effectively as a diverse body comprised of government departments, employers, public sector representatives, and NGOs. The training will also address the need to secure a sustainable funding base for the Forums through leveraging funds from child-friendly businesses

(perhaps through the Abrinq Foundation's program as detailed in section #2), or, alternatively, along the lines proposed by the National Forum for itself: monthly contributions by member organizations.

- (4) Through technical assistance from BEPS, training will be provided to the three forums in developing a common vision, strategic planning, and general institutional strengthening. The State Forums will then train municipal forums and tutelary councils as appropriate.
- (5) Finally, if there are no representatives from government departments of education on the State Forums, efforts will be made to include such representatives in order to strengthen the focus on education as a key element in the struggle to prevent and eliminate child labor.

### **ILLUSTRATIVE IMPLEMENTING MECHANISM**

The implementation of this strategy will require considerable management and oversight in each of the three states. Moreover, because the funds provided to Brazil for its child labor initiative might be a one-off allocation, it will be necessary to begin implementation in as timely a manner as possible. For these reasons, it is recommended that the funds be directed to the Partners of the Americas, which is the prime contractor for the POMMAR project, and that POMMAR's program be expanded to include the implementation of this child labor strategy.

POMMAR has a representative in each of the three states targeted in this strategy who can take on the role of coordinating the myriad inputs required to implement the strategy, including ensuring that the linkages required between organizations to carry out the different dimensions of the strategy are made and that their collaboration is effective. Further, as noted in the early sections of the strategy, POMMAR has a presence in these areas, has established relationships with local government officials, and has been directly supporting many of the local NGOs and projects that will play a major role in implementing the strategy—all of which will facilitate timely and effective implementation of the strategy. Beyond this, placing POMMAR in the position of managing the implementation of USAID's child labor strategy will naturally reinforce USAID's existing work with at-risk youth and create a synergy that will be beneficial to both initiatives.

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