

Drop-outs return to school

One in four children in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu do not finish primary school, often due to the fact that they have to work.

Working children are a normal phenomenon in India. They earn money to contribute to their family's paltry income. Often they end up in very demanding or dangerous working environments like the catering industry or manufacturing industry, where they help to make such things as carpets, matches or glass. Poor parents do not encourage their



children to go to school. Approximately 6.3 million children live in the state of Tamil Nadu. The project focuses on 2 districts with a combined child population of 350,000. According to a recent survey, 70,000 of them do not go to school because they are working. It's not just money that plays a role; boring classrooms, uninspiring teachers and a lack of schools are also important factors. The longer children stay away from school, the more difficult it is for them to pick up the thread again.

Child-friendly schools

Supported by ING Chances for Children, UNICEF is

working on the National Child Labor Project (NCLP) in Tamil Nadu. The aim of the project is to get working children to go back to school. The project focuses on children who have dropped out and who therefore may be tempted to take a job. The NCLP wants to offer these children an alternative in the form of high-quality education at child-friendly schools.

So-called remedial schools are an important element of the project. Here, children who have dropped out are given the opportunity to make up for lost time. The schools are supervised by Unicef and are provided with teaching materials. Teachers receive special training. At the same time, UNICEF is creating information campaigns to convince the community that they must combat child labor.

Complete education

UNICEF expects that the goals of the project in Tamil Nadu will be achieved in 2007. At the end of the year, 15,000 children will be receiving a complete education at 400 remedial schools and learning centers. All the schools and centers will be provided with sufficient teaching materials. Approximately 600 teachers will have been trained in motivation and educational theory. Moreover, the chance of children wasting their futures by working at a young age will have been reduced considerably. Almost 200 employees at government institutions will have been informed about child labor and education. And employers and parents will by then be aware of children's rights, the risks of child labor and the importance of education.

Aruna Rathnam, UNICEF field worker in Tamil Nadu:

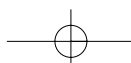
'In no other country do so many children perform labor as in India. Their prospects: a lifetime of hard, underpaid work. Thanks to ING Chances for Children, thousands of drop-outs are given a chance to escape this. Children who do not learn to read and write at an early age and who do not go to school have poor prospects for the future. For a child, earning 1 dollar a day for unskilled work seems quite a lot, but they will still be earning that in 5 years', 10 years' time. Only by getting an education can these children break the vicious circle of poverty and child labor.'



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Facts and figures

India

- Population: more than 1 billion
- 1 in 12 children die before the age of 5
- 35% live on less than US\$1 per day
- Access to primary education: 80% boys, 73% girls

Tamil Nadu

- Population: 62 million
- 6.3 million children between the ages of 6 and 11
- 20% of children between the ages of 5 and 14 work
- 28% of children do not complete primary school

Project goals

- Ensuring that more than 15,000 children go to school
- Supporting 400 remedial schools
- Training 600 teachers
- Informing 200 employees at government institutions
- Running an information campaign aimed at the entire community



Tamil Nadu in India



'It is fantastic to see that the victims of child labor can become children again. By providing them with access to education, we are giving them a future! I've seen with my own eyes that we really can make a difference in the lives of these children.'

(Caroline Klein, Manager at ING The Netherlands)



UNICEF is the child rights organization of the United Nations. UNICEF champions the rights of all children, irrespective of race, nationality, political persuasion or gender and has aid programs in 155 countries. UNICEF works to provide healthcare, proper nutrition, education, clean water and hygiene to children. The organization provides aid on condition that national or local authorities contribute to the financing and implementation. Additionally, the local population must also be prepared to participate actively in the projects. Education is the key to personal growth and a better future. A child can develop optimally through schooling. It is no coincidence that the second millennium development goal is 'Basic education for all children worldwide'. UNICEF is committed to this cause.

See www.unicef.org



ING Chances for Children

ING Chances for Children is a worldwide program run by the ING Group. The aim of ING Chances for Children is to provide children with access to high-quality education.

ING strives to achieve this by doing volunteer work in the local communities in which it is active. In addition, ING co-operates with UNICEF to achieve its aims. ING Chances for Children is supporting three educational projects in different countries: Ethiopia, Brazil and India.

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