

# **Child Labor Eradication Programs in Andhra Pradesh**

M. Venkatarangaiya Foundation

## **Introduction**

This chapter describes the child labor situation in the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh, including a description of the government policies aimed at eliminating child labor. The chapter also describes the child-labor eradication activities of the M. Venkatarangaiya Foundation (heretofore referred to as MV Foundation), a non-governmental organization (NGO) based in Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh that has been especially active and influential in the child labor forum. This chapter serves three purposes: (1) To clarify the extent of the child labor problem in Andhra Pradesh, (2) To describe what policies have already been implemented to tackle the child labor problem, both by government and NGOs, and (3) To provide specific information on the activities of MV Foundation.

The remainder of the chapter is organized as follows: Section I is a description of the child labor situation in Andhra Pradesh. It

presents a snapshot of the number of non-school-going children in each district of Andhra Pradesh. Section II presents an overview of the legislation and programs related to child labor, implemented by the Indian central government and the state government of Andhra Pradesh. Section III focuses on the child labor eradication activities of MV Foundation. First, a timeline and description of MV Foundation's previous child labor projects are presented. Next, the specific strategies of MV Foundation in implementing child labor eradication projects are described. Along the way, this section addresses two issues that may be of interest to social scientists studying the impact of programs implemented by large NGOs such as MV Foundation: Firstly, how does MV Foundation select the locations of their child labor programs? Secondly, who are the community-level partners of MV Foundation at the program sites, and how might they affect the magnitude of program impact?

## **I The Magnitude of Child Labor in Andhra Pradesh**

As shown in Table 1, the total number of children (age 5-14) as per the census 2001 is 17,713,764. Number of school attending children as per the school education department (2004-05 unpublished statistical report) is 13,003,768. The total number of out of school children (total child population minus number of school going children) is 4,709,996. Thus the total child labor in Andhra Pradesh is 4,709,996, going by the definition that any child out of school is a child labor.

The Andhra Pradesh education department claims that there are only 435,013 children out of school and 96% are enrolled in schools (July 2003, Dept. of Education, Government of AP). At the same time, the government claims that there is a dropout rate of 69.12 % from class I to class X, of school going children.

**Table 1. Magnitude of Child Labor in Andhra Pradesh by District**

S.L.No.	District	Census - 2001			School Data	NUMBER OF OUT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN
		5 to 14			I to X	
		Boys	Girls	Total		
1	Adilabad	337845	321486	659331	507384	151947
2	Ananthapoor	453393	424777	878170	628896	249274
3	Chittoor	406401	385153	791554	638004	153550
4	Kadapa	301200	285324	586524	481029	105495
5	East Godavari	553137	543356	1096493	748438	348055
6	Guntur	484636	470000	954636	567442	387194
7	Hyderabad	443063	421352	864415	739262	125153
8	Karimnagar	404875	391273	796148	683304	112844
9	Khammam	316626	301616	618242	446557	171685
10	Krishna	459892	443397	903289	559625	343664
11	Kurnool	485087	451706	936793	653554	283239
12	Mahboobnagar	486078	451714	937792	658788	279004
13	Medak	347348	330459	677807	497431	180376
14	Nalgonda	413267	388406	801673	636722	164951
15	Nellore	289376	273269	562645	407674	154971
16	Nizamabad	291355	275774	567129	429975	137154
17	Prakasam	355265	334729	689994	469816	220178
18	Ranga Reddy	432027	410882	842909	817022	25887
19	Srikakulam	303773	284867	588640	407419	181221
20	Vizag	437499	413112	850611	487433	363178
21	Vizianagaram	257481	244891	502372	369988	132384
22	Warangal	400965	375821	776786	638651	138135
23	West Godavari	418284	411527	829811	529354	300457
	<b>Total</b>	<b>9078873</b>	<b>8634891</b>	<b>17713764</b>	<b>13003768</b>	<b>4709996</b>

## **II Government Programs for Eradication of Child Labor**

### **II.1 Legal Basis of the Programs at the National and State Levels**

The need to eliminate child labor and to provide formal education to all children was perceived to be crucial for the all round development of the country by the constitution makers of our country as early as at the time of independence. Even before that social reformers had emphasized the need to provide education to all children. Child marriages were banned in the country much before independence. Bonded labor system was widely condemned. The understanding was carried forward by the constitution makers of the country and article 39 (e) lays down a duty on the part of the state to protect children from exploitation and to offer an opportunity and the facilities to develop the children in conditions of freedom and dignity. Similarly, Article 15 (13) permits the government to enact laws that prohibits child labor and protection of child rights. Article 24 prohibits

employment of children below 14 years of age in any factory, mine or any other hazardous employment. Formal education was thought to be important for the growth and all round development of children as prescribed by the Article 45 of the Indian Constitution. It states “ The State would endeavor to provide within 10 years of Independence, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years”

Consequent to this, various legal provisions were enacted from time to time to eliminate child labor. Even prior to independence, various legislations were in place banning child labor in certain activities. Table 2 lists all the major acts and legislations enacted to stop child labor by the state in a chronological sequence.

In spite of the existence of the various laws regarding child labor in the country and efforts on part of non-governmental organizations, children continue to work in most parts of the country. This sorry state of affairs points to the inadequacies of such legislative measures in curbing child labor. The legislation regarding child labor in India is very limited in its scope and does not cover all children. The plethora of laws cover only about 8% of the total child labor activities, as these

laws are not applicable in the case of agriculture and also tertiary activities such as retail and wholesale trade, restaurants etc.

Legislation prohibiting child labor may actually end up compounding the problem by legitimizing child labor. For instance, the Child Labor (Prohibition And Regulation) Act, 1986, is in violation of article 14, 21, 23 and 24 of the constitution. This legislation removes the protection given by these articles to children against employment in all hazardous work and against exploitation and injustice by not prescribing a minimum age and prohibiting employment of children only in certain occupations and processes.

As is obvious from the name of the act itself, the Child Labor (Prohibition And Regulation) Act, 1986, does not prohibit child labor in total, but talks about regulating it. It is important to note that as long as child labor is regulated and not prohibited in even one occupational category, there will not be elimination of child labor. It not only provides for misuse of the law by the employers through the various loopholes but also in some ways allows the existence of child labor by not prohibiting it completely. The legislation fails to recognize the largest category of child laborers, that is, those children who are

**Table 2. History of Legislation Relating to Child Labor in India**

Year	Legislation	Age that regulations apply	What it says
1881	The Factories Act	7	Working hours limited to 9 hours
1891	The Factories Act	9	Working hours limited to 7 hours
1901	The Mines Act	12	Specifically for mines
1911	The Factories Act	9	Work in certain dangerous processes Prohibited
1922	The Factories (Amendment) Act	15	Working hours limited to 6 hours
1923	The Indian Mines Act	13	Raised the age to 13 years
1926	The Factories (Amendment) Act	15	Working in two separate factories on same day prohibited
1931	The Indian Ports Act	12	Related to child labour handling goods At ports
1932	The Tea District's (Emigrant Labour) Act		Migration was prohibited without Parents
1933	The Children (Pledging of Labour) Act		First law against bonded labour
1934	The Factories (Amendment) Act	12-15	Employment prohibited in certain areas And employment hours restricted to 5 hrs.
1935	The Mines Amendment Act	15	Working hours regulated to 10 hours Above ground and 9 hours below
1938	The Employment of Children Act	13	Handling of goods allowed for 12-14 age
1948	The Factories Act	14	Concerning employment in government Establishments
1951	Employment of Children (Amendment) Act	17	Prohibited working for 15-17 at ports And railways
1951	The Plantations Labour Act	12	Prohibited working of children under 12
1952	The Mines Act	15	Required medical certificate for Underground work
1954	The Factories (Amendment) Act	17	Prohibited work at nights
1958	The Merchant Shipping Act	15	Prohibits work on ship except in certain Areas
1961	The Motor Transport Worker Act	15	Prohibits working in any motor transport Undertaking
1961	The Apprentices Act	14	Prohibits apprenticeship/training
1966	The Beedi and Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act	14	Prohibits working in tobacco factories
1978	Employment of Children (Amendment) Act	15	Prohibits working on and near railway Premises
1986	The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act	14	Most comprehensive Bans employment in specified industries Regulates the working condition where Not prohibited Uniformity on definition of child in Related laws



engaged in non-wage activities. By not recognizing these children, the legislations leave out a large chunk of children who are the most vulnerable child laborers. Further, the legislation does not consider any activity related to agriculture as child labor even if it is for wage. Statistically, the largest numbers of child laborers are still in agriculture and the absence of any legal or legislative covers makes it easily acceptable to employ children in this sector.

Furthermore, as described in a document by the ILO,

*“... having enacted so many acts, little attention has been given towards enforcement. In the absence of enforcement, the legislative measures are easily flouted. Between 1990-93, at the central level only 537 inspections were undertaken under the Child Labor (Prohibition And Regulation) Act, 1986; a total of 1,203 irregularities were detected, but only 7 prosecutions were launched, only 5,060 violations were observed, out of which 772 were convicted.”\**<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>\*1</sup> Quoted from the “Core Training Manual for Trainers and Resource Persons To Be Trained under the ILO’s IPEC-APSBP on Child Labor”, p.70.

## **II.2 Description of Individual Programs**

### **II.2.a National Child Labor Project (NCLP)**

The Andhra Pradesh government implements the NCLP project in 22 districts covering 65,000 children every year. The NCLP project began in 1988 focusing only on children employed in hazardous child labor and 2 special schools were set up. Under this scheme children who were working in hazardous industries were to be withdrawn from work to attend special schools set up exclusively for them. There were 50 children in each school, children were to be provided mid-day meals and for compensating their loss of livelihood the parents were to be given a stipend of Rs.100 per month. These children were also to be given vocational training in order to equip them for joining the labor force as skilled workers. In many districts in Andhra Pradesh this scheme was modified to include all children out of schools. Further, bridge course camps substituted for special schools and children were prepared in large numbers to join formal schools through such camps. This enabled reaching out to a higher number of children than

envisaged in the original scheme. In many districts the idea of giving stipends to parents was totally abandoned as it was felt that this would undermine all those efforts of poor parents who are already sending children to schools. It was also felt that incentives were unnecessary and emphasis was to be on changing the attitudes and mindsets of communities as well as increasing the capacities of the Government.

#### II.2.b Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty (SERP) and District Poverty Initiatives Project (DPIP)

The Poverty Alleviation Program in six districts of Andhra Pradesh has included elimination of child labor through universal elementary education (UEE) as an important component of its strategy to alleviate poverty. Initially the focus of this program was on withdrawing girl children from work as they were seen as the most deprived in the society in every respect. Therefore, the SERP program had built in a component of a residential school for such children through the social welfare department. It was found that bringing girl children to school would be more effective under an expanded

program of elimination of child labor, which includes social mobilization in building up of a norm that no child must work. Keeping this in view the SERP project has taken up an experiment based on MV Foundation's model in 30 mandals (administrative units) of the five districts on a pilot basis covering 1,230 villages and 163,024 children in school and out of school.

#### II.2.c Education Department and District Primary Education Program (DPEP), Government of Andhra Pradesh

The Department of School Education has recognized that there is an inextricable link between the program of elimination of child labor and universalizing elementary education. It views these two issues as simultaneous and interlinked processes. At the same time, the issue of providing quality of education was seen as a continuous process and not a prerequisite for bringing children to school.

The Department clearly enunciated that it was necessary to provide access to all children to formal day schools. It felt that alternate schools, non-formal education centers and bridge schools

were to be developed as purely temporary strategies to mainstream children to formal school network and not as separate streams of education.

While it earlier viewed enrolment and retention as two separate processes it modified its plans to include all children in 5-14 age group simultaneously with a single plan for enrolment and retention, thus age/gender specific strategies were to be drawn up to withdraw children from work and to enroll them into schools. The Andhra Pradesh government also envisaged simplification of procedures for facilitating admission of children into formal schools at multiple levels. A school was viewed as an institution that protects ALL rights of children including the right to education.

With the above in view 137,052 additional teachers have been recruited in the last six years to ensure that the teacher pupil ratio is brought to the optimum level of 1:40. In addition it has recruited Vidya Volunteers through the School Education Committees for “mobilizing, enrolling and retaining children in primary, upper

primary and secondary schools”<sup>\*2</sup>. Further, 7,351 new primary schools have been sanctioned and 4,352 primary schools were upgraded into upper primary schools. In addition 1,049 Girijana Vidya Vikas Kendra (GVVK) schools in the tribal areas are being converted to primary schools.

Apart from expanding the infrastructural facilities of government schools, in terms of buildings, teachers and so on, the Government has also issued a number of Government Orders to make school admission and management rules more flexible keeping in mind the needs and circumstances of first generation literates.

Through the DPEP program it strengthened planning and other capacities of social mobilization at the mandal level by the education department. The mandal was seen as the basic unit of administration. The School Education Committees were to develop, implement habitation wise education plans and also play a role to mobilize and sensitize the community for schooling of out of school children.

The Government of Andhra Pradesh has enacted the Andhra

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<sup>\*2</sup> Quoted from “Education for all - A mission”.

Pradesh School Education Community Participation Act 13/98 to reform school education by ensuring people's participation in the administration of schools through empowerment of parents. Table 3 shows the number of school education committees (SECs), at each administrative level, that have been constituted under this act 13/98 and 31/2000 (Amendment to Act 13/98). Elections to school committees and other education committees were held in early 2001.

Table 3. Number of School Education Committees

<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Nature of Committee</b>	<b>No. of Committees constituted</b>
1.	School Committees	99618
2.	Panchayat Education Committees	20436
3.	Mandal Education Committees	1017
4.	Municipal Education Committees	47
5.	District Education Committees	14

School Committees have been actively participating in the school administration. Contribution received from communities to an extent of Rs. 21.9 million is a clear indicator of their involvement in management of schools. An educational profile of School Committee members revealed that over 10,000 School Committee Chairpersons had studied up to Class 2. A module containing language, mathematics and general topics of 12-day duration was prepared and tried out in 10 districts conducting training to school committee chairpersons in May 2000.

Table 4 lists government orders that aim to facilitate school attendance and retention by children.



Table 4. Government Orders Issued to Encourage Children to Attend

Schools

Sl. No	GO Number/ Date	Details
1.	6536/DPEP/B5 / 2000 Dated 24/8/2002	It was instructed that attendance monitoring of teachers and pupils will be done regularly and fortnightly from 1st September 2001 and the MRPs will be personally held responsible for giving false information.
2.	G.O.Ms.No.53 Dated 20/4/2001	In order to ensure that the detention of students at the primary level is kept to a minimum so that high incidence of stagnation leading to wastage is minimised, it was proposed that the minimum attendance for students in classes I to VI shall be 60% (from 80%) Further, in case the student secures in the prescribed tests and examinations not less than 40% marks the attendance requirement shall be waived. Moreover, the minimum attendance prescribed shall be calculated from the date of admission of the child in the School.
3.	No. 272/B4-1/2001 Dated 19/4/2001	In order to prevent a number of children dropping out of school after class V, partly because of the shortage of upper primary sections and partly because of the unfamiliarity of the children with the new school it was suggested that the Headmaster of the primary school concerned will first prepare a list of all children in class V due to go to class VI and will communicate this list personally to the headmaster of the nearest UP School or High School. The Headmaster of the UP School or High School as the case may be will automatically admit the child in the school. It shall be the responsibility of the concerned primary school to ensure that school based certificates such as transfer certificates and so on are given.
4.	272/B4-1/2001 Dated 20/4/2001	Keeping in mind that in many schools children are being detained in the same class each year without any valid reasons it was ordered that as a general rule all children would be promoted to the next class. All children who have been given rice on account of regular attendance will be automatically promoted to the next class since they have satisfied the attendance criterion. No child will be detained in the same class merely on the grounds that he/she has not achieved the appropriate standard. Every teacher shall prepare and submit to the MEO through the Headmaster a list of all children detained in his/her class along with reasons. The Headmaster of the concerned school will be held responsible for any wrong detention of a child in the same class.

### **II.3 Fund Allocation Processes of the DPEP**

All the additional project coordinators (APCs) of the DPEP prepare the annual work plans comprising the social and budget report to the state office. The project director prepares accordingly the necessary budget plan in consultation with the Department of Education. Funds are allocated as per the norms and conditions of the total project goals and objectives to the districts. The district collector, who is the chairman of this project, releases funds respectively.

### **II.4 Participation of NGOs in the Operation of Residential Bridge Courses**

District level government functionaries submit the proposals for the required number of residential bridge courses (RBCs) in their respective districts to the state level management. APCs conduct meetings at district level with NGOs, and invite proposals from them for establishment of residential camps. Subsequently the received proposals are scrutinized and some NGOs are assigned the task of

setting up the residential bridge course camps.

### **III Activities of MV Foundation**

#### **III.1 History of Past Interventions and Achievements**

Table 5 shows a timeline of MV Foundation's activities in child labor eradication. As can be seen from the activity descriptions, MV Foundation's programs involve not only establishing and running residential bridge course (RBC) camps, but also surveying villages and mobilizing communities to change their perception of education and labor. In fact, what differentiates MV Foundation's approach from other agencies and NGOs is its commitment to mobilizing the entire community to value education. Table 6 lists MV Foundation's institutional partners in each of the districts where it is active. In addition, Appendix 1 provides detailed disaggregated information on MV Foundation's activities throughout Andhra Pradesh. The information is organized at the level of individual mandals, which are administrative unit composed of around 20 to 50 villages.

**Table 5. Hisotry of MV Foundation's Interventions and Achievements**  
Mandal and District-wise

Year	Area	Activities	Focus Group	Other Groups	Policy Makers
1991	Shankerpally	Camp	SC - Community	Youth	
CRY	5 - Villages	Land / Houses / Wages / Co-Operation and 3 - Days Camp, NFE Center			
1992	SKP	Camp	Present all Children (5-14) Age wise Stategies	40 Youth, Sarpanch	Local Bodies
CRY		Survey, Mobilisation 3 - Days Camp, NFE Center			
1993	SKP	Enrollment (5-8)	PTAs, Youth Clubs	SBVV	GPs, MRO
UNICEF	All Villages (36)	Cycle Rally, Youth Short term Camp (220-Children) (Chevella / Nawabpet) News Letters			
1994	SKP	3 - Days Camp	Girl Youth	SBVV, PTAs Employers	Mandal Expansion & Officers/Police
	Chevella (3Vill)	Survey Older Children (VIIth) Girls Motivation Center Village level activities Officials, Employers Non Negotiables			
1995	SKP, Chevella, (15 Village) Nawabpet	MVF was Recognised as Dist Resource Girls Camp Class one Khali karo (3300 Children)	Post Literacy Programme (DRDA, 1200), Mandal Resource Pe Other NGOs	PAC - Chevella, Youth, GP, PTAs	Dist. Collector
1996	SKP, Chevella, Nawabpet, Marpally, Vikarabad, Pargi, Tandur, Basheerabad,	Mahila group School strengthening School teachers Long term camp Trainings Motivation centre (Morning) PTA Contribution by Ration card 5/-	BKVV	-----	S.W -D.D, DEO, DDAE Labour
1997	SKP, Chevella, Nawabpet, Marpally, Vikarabad, Pargi, Tandur, Basheerabad Mominpet, Pudur, Doma, Shabad, Dharur, Peddemul	Back to School Training - govt / NGOs In home Training 1st polytechnic Coaching for children Exposure to Orissa, Rajasthan, AS Resource ORYNS, Othar AOB training BKVV Documention	Employers Meeting	CRPcs formed Mandal level & Village Level by youth	State level Officials DSE, Social Welfare, SCERT

**Table 5. Hisotry of MV Foundation's Interventions and Achievements (continued)**  
Mandal and Districtt-wise

Year	Area	Activities	Focus Group	Other Groups	Policy Makers
1998	Kulkacharla	Focus on Girl child programme focus on cotton seed farmers mass youth rally (1000) child marraiges Global march - coastal Andhra NGOs , NAFRE Co-ordination resource to other Govt / NGOs / Karnataka Training EDW / DEPT on child labour by BKVV Pilot project - NCLP 8 - Dist. DPEP Resource to UNDP Vidya volunteers - 1500/- GP / SECs Pressure group dist. level		GPs, Youth, SECs	Labour dept.
1999		Girls programme DPEP Girls camp State level Summer schools BKVV - in Other districts resource to Dpep V & VII Class retention Institutional arrangement Child Marraiges Govt.Officials involment Political stand on Child labour Other Districts / NGOs Demand for UPSs / H.Ss Non MVF group, Youth, BKVV, GPs, SECs		GRPC (Mothers)SEC,G P,School Teachers,School Going Girls committee,HM convenor	State Education dept W omen&Chi ld Welfare dept
2000		Justice Ramaswamy Mandal level officials involment			

**Table 5. History of MV Foundation's Interventions and Achievements (continued)**

Mandal and District-wise

Year	Area	Activities	Focus Group	Other Groups	Policy Makers
2001	Adilabad, Chittoor, Mahabubnagar, Nalgonda, Srikakulam, Vizianagaram and Kurnool	Intensive Campaign and Mobilisation in the new regions. RangaReddy district became the resource centre for training the groups from other districts	Community and Public Representatives	Tribals and Youth	District Collectors and PDs
2002	Assam	Setting up of motivation centres, short term camps, campaign against child marriages, conduct of bridge course camps.	Community, SECs, Sarpanches	Student Unions, Gram Panchayats	Mission Director, Assam
2003	Kadapa(22 mandals), Ananthapur(1 mandal), Visakapatnam (urban project), Warangal(1 mandal) East Godavari (10 mandals) and urban schools in Hyderabad	Strengthening of Gram Panchayats, CRPFs, GRPFs, SECs, BKVVs.	Community	National and Multi national Cotton Seed Producers, Child Rights Protection Forums	APCs, District Collectors and SPD
2004	Kurnool (additional 41 Mandals), Adilabad (additional 18 mandals) and the state of Madhya Pradesh. Technical Support to Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu.	Awareness campaigns in newly expanded mandals in other districts. State level CRPF formation and registration of nearly 20000 members	Community	Child Rights Protection Forums	District Collectors and PDs

**Table6. MV Foundation's Past Joint Programs with Other Agencies**

<b>S.No</b>	<b>District (Project Initiated Year)</b>	<b>Project Initiation Support Institution / Partner</b>	<b>Current Project Partner / Support Institution</b>
1	RangaReddy (1991)		HIVOS
2	Nalgonda (1999)	Azim Premji Foundation	HIVOS
3	Adilabad (2001)	DPIP	DPEP
4	Chittoor (2001)	DPIP	HIVOS
5	Mahbubnagar (2001)	DPIP	HIVOS
6	Srikakulam (2001)	DPIP	HIVOS
7	Vizianagaram (2001)	DPIP	HIVOS
8	Ananthapur (Oct'03)	SSA	SSA
9	Hyderabad(Jan'04)		ROUND TABLE
10	Visakapatnam(Sep'03 - June'04)	Municipal Corporation	-
11	East Godavari (Dec'03)	District Collector/NCLP	SSA
12	Kadapa (Jan'04)		DPEP/SSA
13	Kurnool (Jan'04)	SERP / NORAD	DPEP / UNDP
14	Assam	Mission Director	-
15	Tamil Nadu		NGO
16	Madhya Pradesh		UNDP
17	Maharashtra		UNDP

## **III.2 MV Foundation's Strategies and Actions to Create Demand: "Social Mobilization"**

### **III.2.a Movement for Change**

Under the system as it currently operates, the children in schools are catered to from the resources allocated by the government. However, a significant number remain out of school. In order to move towards a position where all children are enrolled in full-time formal day schools, where universalization of elementary education becomes established, a movement for change must be generated through mobilization within the communities. The institutionalized education system as it exists does not cater to the needs of first generation learners and there is a need for adaptation.

The aim of this movement for change is twofold:

1. To change attitudes which prevent children from attending school.
2. To build the capacities of the state system of education and the educational institutions to respond to the first generation



learners so that all schools are equipped to serve the needs of children from poor families.

The movement will cease to be necessary when the institutions, structures and processes are in place to accommodate all children under a truly national system of education.

### III.2.b Enlisting Community Support

The program of withdrawing children from work and enrolling them into schools looks simple. However, it requires patience and giving the poor due respect. Illiterate parents want their children to have a better life than theirs. They accept their own destiny but know instinctively that access to education can improve the quality of their children's future.

Appeals to the employers must be made. There could be resistance to the idea that children will no longer be available for work. Employers perceive the withdrawing of bonded labor children from work as questioning their authority. There could be a hardening of

stands and at times, as this issue is seen as an act of defiance by the poor or lower castes. On such occasions, local institutions should act as mediators in support of child rights. They must pacify the employers.

### III.2.c Celebrating Heroes

Although it seemed a most unlikely strategy for MV Foundation in the early days, the practice of congratulating and felicitating parents and employers for their part in releasing child labor to school life has proved to be very successful and popular. Choosing the path of encouragement and promotion is based on the philosophy that people will do the honorable thing if given the opportunity and the motivation.

### III.2.d Creating a Norm

Social mobilization is the context within which MV Foundation works to liberate working children and spread the practice of

enrolment of all children in the age group 6 to 14 years in schools. Without the support of the local community, the whole process is not sustainable in the long-term and the people most affected will not gain ownership of the program. The tradition of not sending children to school is so engrained in the community that it would require concerted efforts on the part of all sectors to change attitudes and approaches. The ultimate goal is to create a norm of sending children to school which can withstand any pressures, internal or external.

Working children remain at work not because they want to, but often because there are forces which prevent them from changing their actual situation. The vested interests of employers and the lack of familiarity of parents with the system combined with the unwillingness of the state machinery to accommodate all children of school going age are deterrents to the universalization of elementary education. Just as the urban middle class are party to a culture which regards education as a necessary part of childhood and adolescence, many of the rural poor grow up in an environment of illiteracy and child labor.

MV Foundation promotes a dual approach to the goal of

universalization of elementary education - on one hand, the working children must be freed and simultaneously, they must be made ready to engage with formal schools in their locality. A comprehensive approach is required to remove the restrictions which hold children back and to facilitate conditions which enable access to school. All these strategies of social mobilization are designed to operate on the two opposing locales: the work place and the school.

These sites are most affected by the removal of children from work and the universal enrollment in schools. If those who occupy those sites are not convinced of the validity of the argument in favor of schooling then, at the first obstacle, the house of cards will come tumbling down. The foundations must be laid for resilience and longevity.

### III.2.e Integrated Approach

This has implications for how the MV Foundation approaches its work in the community - it must be an integrated approach based on inclusion and collective decision-making. The mobilization activities

give rise to the emergence of support groups which in time may consolidate as a forum for the protection of the rights of the child. This forum can attract the participation of people who seem to have little in common or indeed are typically in opposition to each other - landlords and tenants, employers and employees, educated and illiterate, rich and poor. Protecting the rights of the child is an emotive issue and many people like to have their status enhanced by being associated with a noble cause.

### III.2.f Local institutions

There must be a consensus in the community on the need to strengthen the existing structures such as the schools, social welfare hostels or ashram schools. This requires the participation of local institutions such as the Gram Panchayats and the School Education Committees (SECs). A consequence of social mobilization will be the identification of potential partners for the program and an increase in the responsibility taken by local institutions for the insistence on children's right to education through formal schools.

The effects of mobilization on schools involve expanding their activities to accommodate all the children in their surrounding areas. This would require extra classrooms or school buildings, the appointment of more teachers, provision of equipment and materials and framing policies which guarantee the quality of education.

Abolishing child labor and universalizing elementary education simultaneously requires provision to be made for older children who cannot easily be accommodated in the existing classes in formal schools - at least initially. This necessitates 'bridging' from one state to another and is the reason for the establishment of the camps.

### III.2.g Motivating young people

*"You see things as they are and you ask 'Why?'"*

*I dream of things that never were and ask 'Why not?'"*

- George Bernard Shaw

Many people who visit the M V Foundation camps are impressed by the enthusiasm and vigor of the camp teachers. Likewise, those

who witness the youth activists at work in the community marvel at how committed and dedicated they are.

The youth volunteers come from a similar background to the children with whom they work; they have an instinctive understanding of the child's experience and an empathy with their situation. Training given to volunteers is done within the context of their own lived experience; they gain confidence in theories which resonate with this experience - in this way, the program and process make sense to them. The MV Foundation program offers an ideological framework for the youth to situate their background and plan for future change.

As a group, young people tend to be attracted by those who seek change, who are willing to struggle for an ideal and who are not afraid of obstacles they may face. They also like the fact that MV Foundation regards them as partners in the program with the aim of sharing resources, not delivering goods or services. They know that education is a good thing and they want to play their part in sharing that with others.

MV Foundation also works closely with youth groups, in term of program implementation at the village level. A description of these

groups and their relationship with MV Foundation is contained in Appendix 2.

### III.2.h The MV Foundation approach

MV Foundation's approach is different to the attitudes which prevail in the environment. This approach is positive, it is optimistic and thus generates interest amongst the young people. These young people had mostly been regarded as "misfits" in their communities, having had an elementary education but typically not enough to enable them to leave their village to take up a professional occupation elsewhere. They had been treated as if they have done something wrong by going to school. The old arguments like: *Why should poor children go to school? Wouldn't they be better off learning a trade?* would erode their confidence over time and lead them to question themselves.

MV Foundation presents them with a constructive view of themselves and the struggles they have been through and reassures them that the pursuit of education is the right thing to do.



However, having lived with the dominant ideology all their lives, many will have internalized the skepticism and cynicism. The challenge for the trainers at the initial sessions is to reach into the hearts of the young people and make a connection with them.

The volunteers are made aware of the two arguments:

*(1) That all children should be free and in school*

*(2) That education is of no use to poor people.*

The group is encouraged to debate and discuss and then, each volunteer must decide which side he/she is on if he/she is to continue with MV Foundation. They must make a commitment to the principle. During the program, the majority of participants decide to be directly involved and any others usually offer support in whatever way they can.

### III.2.i Respect

The MV Foundation approach to training volunteers is characterized by respect. As already mentioned, instead of denigrating

their past histories, MV Foundation appreciates them for the progress they have made so far. When the young people register for the activists' training, they fill in a form with their personal details and answer a question regarding the literacy of their parents on the form (yes/no). The answers are tabulated immediately (no matter how large the number of participants) and the results are given to the group during the course of that day's training. Typically, the majority of the participants are first generation literates. This exercise is effective in a number of ways.

- It establishes a direct contact with the participants and is a practical demonstration of MV Foundation's interest in engaging with them
- It creates a bond among the members of the group
- It creates a link between the participants' families and the children.

From this starting point, the MV Foundation staff can speak about the benefits of education as opposed to the illiteracy of their parents and the message is conveyed to the youth that they too can be

educators. Another way of showing respect for the volunteers is by listening to their ideas for innovation in the implementation of the program and supporting their strategies for intervention. The trained volunteers who go on to train others tend to repeat the process they have been through themselves i.e. the transition from skepticism to acceptance to inspiration.

### III.2.j Survey

A survey of children in and out of school should be carried out by the local youth. This survey would be also an opportunity to campaign on the issue, establish contact with all the groups in the village and generate an open dialogue and discussion on the matter.

Questions raised and responded to in the process would be:

- *What will happen to the families if children do not work and contribute to the family income?*
- *Of what use is education if it cannot provide jobs?*
- *Would educated children be “spoilt” and not respect their parents?*

- *Would they be available for any physical or manual work?*

With regard to the girl children the following apprehensions are to be tackled:

- *Why should girls go to school? They will get married and go away to the in-laws' house in any case.*
- *Is it not better that they are taught to cook and do the work at home and in the fields?*
- *If they get education then the dowry demanded will increase. Who is going to bear all these expenses?*
- *She will have scant respect for her elders.*

The survey also provides the first occasion for a contact with parents in a village and helps in motivating them to participate in village meetings and public debates on children. Parents are encouraged to learn from experiences of others in the same village who had managed to send their children to school instead of work. There begins a process of mutual reinforcement of ideas, which strengthens the resolve of the parents to send their children to schools.

### III.2.k Campaign

As well as the youth orientation programs and the survey, activities to generate an atmosphere conducive to the elimination of child labor include:

Street theatre and children speaking of their own experiences (testimonies)

- Rallies and public meetings
- Discussions with the people
- Door to door campaigns
- Wall posters
- Gram Sabha - village community meetings
- Petitioning the authorities.

In this process it must be recognized that the RBCs are also essential components of the mobilization strategy. In other words they are not to be regarded as educational institutions.

### **III.3 MV Foundation's Decision Rules in Selecting Program Sites**

As can be observed from Appendix 1 and Table 6, the activities of MV Foundation are often motivated by requests from official agencies and private foundations. On the other hand, information on successful project implementation by MV Foundation is transmitted by informal, interpersonal communication to neighboring areas, creating demand for further projects in those neighboring communities. Youth groups often form effective cross-village networks of informal information transmission.

In areas where there is no funding but where there are competing demands made on MV Foundation's time, MV Foundation invests its attention on the mandal where the local groups are willing to take up activities independently on a non funding basis. MV Foundation guides them and provides training and technical support to such initiatives. It also leads them up to either the government or a local donor.

**Appendix 1: Background Information on District-wise Interventions, Such as Participation in Development Programs and Cooperation with District Collectors**

<i>Disctict</i>	<i>Mandal</i>	<i>Cooperating Official</i>	<i>Contribution of MV Foundation</i>
<b>Adilabad</b>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monthly meetings with the DEO and APC with written reports</li> <li>• Weekly one meeting with the Velugu PD and Monthly written reports</li> <li>• District collector visited camps and programme</li> </ul>
	<b>Boath</b>	MEO MRO BKVV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active, Visits camp</li> <li>• Gives Certificates to children, visits camps</li> <li>• Active</li> </ul>
	<b>Ichchoda</b>	MRPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active:</li> <li>• Visit camps,</li> <li>• Participate in Campaign and Mobilisation</li> </ul>
	<b>Bazaarhat-noor</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programme Advisory Committee chaired by ZPTC. This committee reviews the activities of MVF. MEO, MRP, MDO also participate in this committee.</li> </ul>
	<b>Gudihat-noor</b>	MDO, MEO MRPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reports regularly on the programme</li> <li>• participate in campaign</li> </ul>

### Appendix 1 (Continued)

<i>Disctict</i>	<i>Mandal</i>	<i>Cooperating Official</i>	<i>Contribution of MV Foundation</i>
<b>Adilabad</b>	<b>Indravelly</b>	MEO  MRPs BKVV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attends review meetings of the programme, CRPC meetings</li> <li>• Participate in campaign and mobilisation</li> <li>• Active</li> </ul>
	<b>Jainoor</b>	MEO  BKVV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very active, participated in youth padayatra. During Chaduvulapanduga joint programme of MVF with MEO.</li> <li>• Very strong group. Take part in campaign every Sunday</li> </ul>
	<b>Support To Other Mandals</b>	<p>MVF went to the following Mandals to provide technical support on a written request from the DEO: Thamsi Talamadugu Jainath Bela Rebbana Dilawarpur</p> <p>In all these Mandals, MVF is providing support to DPEP. This is not-funded.</p> <p>MVF went to the following mandals to provide technical support on a request from the MLA, Rathod Ramesh: Sirpur (U) Kherameri Narnoor Utnoor Neredigonda</p> <p>MVF receives no funding for the support provided in these mandals.</p>	



**Appendix 1 (Continued)**

<i>Disctict</i>	<i>Mandal</i>	<i>Cooperating Official</i>	<i>Contribution of MV Foundation</i>
<b>Chittoor</b>		DPEP APC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regularly report to him by telephone and submit monthly written reports</li> </ul>
	<b>Gudipally</b>	MEO  MPDO  MRPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participates in MVF Core Group meetings</li> <li>• Regularly visits bridge course camps</li> <li>• Makes field visits along with MVF field staff</li> <li>• Mandal Staff report to MPDO on a regular basis</li> <li>• Very active and part of BKVV</li> <li>• Participate in MVF Review meetings</li> <li>• Participate in field campaign and mobilisation</li> </ul>
	<b>Nimana-pally</b>	MEO  MRPs  MDO  BKVV  Nodal Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MVF staff regularly report to the MEO</li> <li>• Conducted special classes in the camp for all children</li> <li>• Deputed a District Resource Person to the camp to explain a model test paper to the children taking Class VII examination.</li> <li>• Participate in rallies and campaign</li> <li>• Visit camp regularly</li> <li>• Camp frequent visit</li> <li>• 22 members</li> <li>• Attended MVF Review Meetings</li> </ul>

**Appendix 1 (Continued)**

<i>Disctict</i>	<i>Mandal</i>	<i>Cooperating Official</i>	<i>Contribution of MV Foundation</i>
<b>Chittoor</b>	<b>Sodum</b>	MRP  MDO  BKVV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actively involved</li> <li>Visits camp regularly</li> <li>visits camp</li> <li>40 active members.</li> </ul> They take part in MVF review meetings
	<b>Gangavaram</b>	MEO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regularly visits camp</li> <li>Participates in campaign</li> </ul>
	<b>Baireddy Pally</b>	MEO:  MDO, MRO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Activist</li> <li>Participates in MVF Planning, Campaign and Review meetings.</li> <li>BKVV 18 teachers</li> <li>Visit camp</li> </ul>
	<b>Kvpally</b>	MRPs  MPDO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>active</li> <li>visits camp regularly</li> </ul>
<b>Maha-boobnagar</b>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In all mandals, pamphlet for Ugadi signed by MRO, MEO, MDO and MVF asking employees not to keep any new bonded labour children.</li> </ul>
	<b>Amrabad</b>	MEO Minister	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>visits camps</li> <li>Mr. Ramulu visited camp twice</li> </ul>
	<b>Lingal</b>	MRO, MDO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attended CRPC meeting</li> </ul>
	<b>Maganoor</b>	MEO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Active support</li> </ul>
		MRO, MEO, SI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attended street plays and campaigns</li> </ul>

### Appendix 1 (Continued)

<i>Disctict</i>	<i>Mandal</i>	<i>Cooperating Official</i>	<i>Contribution of MV Foundation</i>
<b>Srikaku-lam</b>		APC  DEO  APC, DEO  Collector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reporting to APC frequently by telephone and monthly written reports</li> <li>• Exempted 7<sup>th</sup> class examination fees at the</li> <li>• District Level for Bridge Course camp children,</li> <li>• Attended one MVF District Core Group meeting—full day</li> <li>• Formal Meetings with collector reporting the progress of the programme</li> </ul> Visited MVF Saribujjili camp
	<b>Saribujjili</b>	MEO  MRPs  MDO  Minister	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very active</li> <li>• Attends meetings</li> <li>• Visits camps regularly</li> <li>• active involvement in total campaign mobilisation and review</li> <li>• Played an important role in the formation of BKVV in other mandals.</li> <li>• Fully active               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Tammineni Sitaram Visited this camp.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<b>Ranastha-lam</b>	MDO  MRO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attends CRPS Meetings, Visits camps</li> <li>• Visits camps</li> </ul>
	<b>Santha-bommali</b>	MEO,MRP BKVV MLA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active</li> <li>• Mr. Acham Naidu, visited the camp.</li> </ul>
	<b>Vajrapukot huru</b>	MEO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active</li> <li>• Visits Camps</li> <li>• Supports in Admissions</li> </ul>
	<b>L.N.Peta</b>	MRPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active, there are members of BKVV, take part in campaign and visit camp regularly</li> </ul>

### Appendix 1 (Continued)

<i>Disctict</i>	<i>Mandal</i>	<i>Cooperating Official</i>	<i>Contribution of MV Foundation</i>
<b>Vizia-nagaram</b>		District Collector  DEO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visited programme in Saluru, Pachipenta, Gurla</li> <li>• Visited Pachipenta twice</li> <li>• APC new and has visited Gurla</li> <li>• All mandals has a CRPC and Sarpanches Forums</li> </ul>
	<b>Saluru</b>	MRPs (2):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in all activities of M.V.Foundation such as Planning, Review and Campaign.</li> <li>• Visit camp regularly</li> <li>• Support camp volunteers in teaching</li> <li>• They gave support in arranging for the camp building etc.</li> </ul>
		MEO:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attends village level meetings</li> <li>• Frequently visits the camp</li> <li>• Facilitates admission of bridge course camp children into regular schools.</li> <li>• Supports camp teachers in developing TLMs</li> </ul>
		MRO:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attends village level meetings</li> </ul>
		BKVV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers Forum for Liberation of Child Labour</li> </ul>
	<b>Pachipenta</b>	MEO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visits camp regularly</li> <li>• Convenor of BKVV (Teachers' Forum for Liberation of Child Labour)</li> <li>• Supports in admissions</li> </ul>
	<b>Kurupam</b>	MRP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active participation in campaign and mobilisation</li> <li>• Visits camps regularly</li> </ul>

**Appendix 1 (Continued)**

<i>Disctict</i>	<i>Mandal</i>	<i>Cooperating Official</i>	<i>Contribution of MV Foundation</i>
<b>Vizia-nagaram</b>	<b>Gurla</b>	MEO, MRP, MLO, MDO, MRO, SI, Health Officer formed Mandal Core Committe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This committee visits the camp regularly</li> <li>• Health Officer visits camp once a month</li> </ul>
	<b>Pusapati-rega</b>	MLO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active participation</li> <li>• Visits camps</li> <li>• SI actively involved</li> </ul>
	<b>G.L.Puram</b>	MEO, MLO BKVV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active</li> </ul>

## **Appendix 2: Youth groups, Description on Political and Community Backgrounds**

In almost every village there are local youth groups who have their affiliations to the political parties or are independently working on local issues. For example in Nalgonda district, many of these youth have a family history of participation in the Telangana Armed Struggle of the nineteen forties- and fifties and subsequent leftist policies in the area. Some of them are also active in 'dalit' movement and politics. Thus they have already been indoctrinated into a worldview, which is either based on a need to resolve 'class contradictions' in the country, and at a global level through 'class struggles' or removal of 'caste oppression' through 'caste conflicts'. Correspondingly, however, there has been little action on the ground to build capabilities of the poor to get their share of basic entitlements to education, health, food participation in decision making and so on.

Thus when MV Foundation approached the youth, it had to wade through the ideological frameworks to raise the issue of child labor and their right not to be exploited, and right to education. The youth

were excited to be indispensable partners even as MV Foundation gave them a ‘tangible’ action program, which they were convinced, could be achieved. They debated, pleaded, argued and contested all the status quoist positions on child labor. They bore the brunt of massive resistance to their interventions. They enjoyed the new found strength in the strategy of inclusion of every one in the society. They worked hard to win over even those who had vehemently opposed them and their families for they knew that the real victory for children lay in a societal consensus on protecting their rights.

The youth play an important role in mobilizing support and motivating communities to join the campaign against child labor; establishing contacts with the Gram Panchayat and involving the Sarpanch in the program; bringing pressure on schools; taking on employers and even facing their wrath; and organising meetings in expression of solidarity.

While being involved in all these activities, the youth discovered themselves as a team who shared knowledge about the lives of children in their village, the condition of local schools, and the enthusiasm or lack of it among the partners in the community. They

learnt how to take decisions in a democratic fashion, conduct review meetings and the rudiments of 'inclusion' as a strategy. They also became united as a 'solidarity group' who enjoyed the rains, mosquito bites, lack of water and food occasionally, as they were registered as challenges rather than disadvantages.