



## **EXPERIENCES IN SOCIAL INNOVATION**

**2006-2007 Cycle**

### **SHARED FIFTH PLACE WINNER**

#### **Program to eradicate child labor and protect adolescents in domestic labor in Belo Horizonte (Brazil)**

The Brazilian NGO "*Circo de Todo Mundo*" (Everyone's Circus) works to progressively eradicate child labor and juvenile domestic work in Belo Horizonte and Minas Gerais, Brazil.

According to the organization responsible for the program, there is a deeply rooted social acceptance of child and youth labor in the Brazilian society. This fact is attributed mainly to widespread poverty. The ILO estimates that approximately 550,000 adolescents between the ages of 10 and 17 work as domestic employees in Brazil. A measure of the NGO's commitment is the fact that it has proposed several bills to the Legislative Assembly to address this subject.

The program networks with 33 allied institutions from civil society, entrepreneurs and government joined under the *Grupo Intermediário de Parceiros -GIP-* (Allied Intermediate Group) which, together with the NGO, was responsible for the Campaign Against Child Domestic Labor launched in 2003 in Belo Horizonte.

In an effort to increase social awareness on the subject, *Circo de Todo Mundo* carries out research, studies and organizes debates and campaigns involving public and private institutions, media and academic establishments in the process.

In the case of minors under 16, the NGO networks with the public and private sector to gain access and provide information on alternatives that may generate extra income for families and thus allow the child to quit work all together. An example of this would be information on alternatives to government assistance.

In the case of adolescents over 16 years of age, the NGO attempts to formalize the situation of domestic labor so that the young worker is paid a minimum wage, receives all the benefits established by law and is allowed time to attend school.

In both cases -under and over 16 year olds - access to health services, psychological support, orientation services and family and social support are

provided. Further, these young girls have access to literacy programs and micro-credits as alternatives to generate family income.

The NGO's areas of action are the following:

- **Prevention:** information campaigns, cultural activities, activities that generate work or income for minors under 16 and their families;
- **Eradication:** identification of cases in which the law has been infringed and implementation of legal measures of protection;
- **Promotion of children's rights:** presentation of bills to the Legislative Assembly that promote the protection of children as domestic workers;
- **Direct assistance:** educational and recreational activities, training and legal and social support.

Since its beginning, the program has counted on the valuable support of the International Labor Organization (ILO). Overtime, it has become a space to receive, monitor, support, and contribute to denouncing the violation of children and youth's rights.

It's Centre for Assistance offers recreational and training opportunities for girls and boys that include different artistic activities, a library and computers with access to the Internet. The methodology used in the Centre helps stimulate the youths' assertiveness, self-esteem and pro-activity, teaching them to exercise an active citizenship and to defend their rights.

One of the most important results to note is that 100% percent of the 220 girls and adolescents that received assistance currently attend school.

The guarantee of access to education opens a whole new perspective on life for these young, domestic workers.

**For more information, please contact:**

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