

Advocacy Case Studies

Cambodia: Joint advocacy action against pornography

A case study of local and national advocacy - forming a coalition to research the issue of pornography and organising a joint protest march against the government's inaction on the issue

A number of organisations in Cambodia - including the Evangelical Fellowship of Cambodia, Tearfund and World Vision - have formed a coalition to try and address the problem of pornography. At present, children under 18 years old have ready access to very explicit pornography. The coalition's concern is that this could lead to further sexual abuse and exploitation, so they have been conducting research, listening to children's views and finding out what pornography is accessible and to whom. As a result, an advocacy plan is now being put together, including a march against pornography.

Source: Glenn Miles, Children at Risk Worker, Cambodia

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Source: Glenn Miles, Children at Risk Worker, Cambodia

Cambodia: Spurring a Provincial Governor into action on behalf of children

A case study of local level advocacy - holding a provincial governor to account, using a summary of the national government's promises to sexually exploited children

After the first international 'World Congress Against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children', the Cambodian government wrote a five year plan to better protect children. Unfortunately, the government has largely failed to implement their promises, particularly in the provinces. This frustrated one outreach worker at "House of Hope" - a Christian project in Cambodia working with children who were previously involved in prostitution (and also part of "Innerchange CRM", an international non-governmental organisation). The outreach worker used to be a civil servant, so he understood bureaucracy. He also wanted to do something so he created a summary of the law and

then met with the Provincial Governor, persuaded him to endorse the summary, and used it to get children under the age of 18 years released from brothels.

Source: Glenn Miles, Children at Risk Worker, Cambodia

Cambodia: Putting children's views on violence into a UN study

A case study of local and national level advocacy, in which child participation led to children's views on violence being included in the UN study on violence against children

In Cambodia there are many children who are victims of violence - either against them directly or against people they know and love. The United Nations has called for violence against children to stop and they are funding a research programme into the situation, aimed at stopping violence against children and raising worldwide attention to the way they are abused.

The network in Cambodia has researched this issue. They asked children in their member projects about how violence affects them and they put the children's answers into a leaflet, into posters and onto a CD. They then used these resources to lobby their government.

The result is that the Cambodian network's research and information has been included in the UN study on violence against children.

Source: Glenn Miles, Children at Risk Worker, Cambodia

Costa Rica: Educating law enforcers about children's rights

A case study of local level advocacy - working in a network to educate the police, teachers, parents and community leaders about the right of children to have an education, and facilitating the reintegration of truanting children back into school

In San José, the network of Christians working with 'children at risk' have been educating the Policía Municipal de San José (San José Police Force) about the rights of children to have an education. Together they have been working to promote sports and cultural activities for children who have dropped out of school. The network is training the police, school teachers, parents and community leaders on how to prevent children from dropping out of school and how to rescue those who have ended up on drugs and alcohol. This involves promoting family and Christian values, as well as the rights of the child. The result has been the reintegration of 50 children back into school. The project is a pilot project but the head of the police force is so pleased with its progress that he has asked the network to consider extending the project to more than 200 other schools in the San José area. He has also suggested that the network could train a special team of officers, with a view to them later become the 'children's police force'.

Source: Ericka Brealey, Viva Network Latin America Regional Centre

India: Release for a boy indebted to a moneylender

A case study of case advocacy at local level - lawyers using the legal system to free children from bonded labour

Sanjay* was 12 years old when his younger sister became ill. His family had to borrow money to pay for her emergency medical expenses and then they had to sell Sanjay to the moneylender to satisfy their debt. Every day Sanjay was forced to labour for hours in the moneylender's factory, closing the ends of Beedi cigarettes. Sometimes, he worked for 16 hours a day, six days a week, without a break. Sanjay was paid a mere 20 rupees a week (approximately 30 pence) with which he was to repay the debt. Due to the exorbitant interest charged on his family's loan, Sanjay was destined to remain bonded to the moneylender for years.

A Christian project worker outside Delhi heard reports about the moneylender from families in the area who were facing financial difficulty. They told him about the way children like Sanjay were being treated. He contacted the International Justice Mission (IJM), one of Viva Network's International Associates and an independent Christian ministry, led by human rights professionals. (IJM helps people suffering injustice and oppression, who are unable to rely on local authorities for relief.)

IJM investigators interviewed Sanjay. They wrote down his story in a legally acceptable way and Sanjay signed the document. It was then included in an IJM report for the District Magistrate. Ten months later, Sanjay was released and his moneylender arrested.

Source: The International Justice Mission

**Not his real name, which has been changed for reasons of confidentiality*

The Philippines: Campaigning to 'Say Yes for Children'

A case study of advocacy at local and national levels - connecting to an international campaign about children's rights

In May 2001, the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches (PCEC) invited the Philippine Children's Ministries Network (PCMN) to represent them at the national launch of the 'Say Yes For Children' campaign. Hosted in the grounds of the presidential palace, the launch invitees included the President, Cabinet Ministers, representatives from UNICEF, the diplomatic community, non-governmental organisations and children who had been helped by different projects within the network.

They were told that the campaign aims to unite the voices of people around the world on ten key issues concerning children - including their rights to health and education and their rights to be protected from HIV/AIDS and exploitation. In pledging support for the campaign, the PCMN representatives agreed to inform the other members of the network (and also non-members) about the campaign. They encouraged them to participate by completing campaign pledge forms, which were later collected and handed in to the UNICEF office in Manila. They also distributed pledge forms to

delegates at the PCEC General Assembly in July 2001 - including representatives from local churches and Christian organisations and denominational church leaders.

The campaign came to a conclusion in May 2002 at the United Nations Special Session on Children in New York, where the petitions from around the globe were presented to Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary General.

Source: Josephina Gutierrez, The Philippine Children's Ministries Network, The Philippines

Thailand: Release for a girl trapped in a brothel

A case study of case advocacy at local level - criminal investigators using the legal system to free children from commercial sexual exploitation

Chandra* was 14 years old when she set off for her home village, after working as a domestic servant in Bangkok. While returning by train, she was befriended by four women who drugged her and sold her into a brothel where she was locked away in a hidden room. By the time she was 17, she had been severely beaten many times, had suffered through three abortions and remained physically locked away to service the brothel 'customers'.

A Christian worker in Bangkok heard of Chandra's plight. She contacted the International Justice Mission, one of Viva Network's International Associates and an independent Christian ministry, led by human rights professionals. (IJM helps people suffering injustice and oppression, who are unable to rely on local authorities for relief.) They used a skilled team of criminal investigators, who infiltrated the brothel and located Chandra and other girls held in forced prostitution. The investigators documented the girls' conditions with video surveillance equipment and then worked with trusted police contacts to raid the brothel and release the girls.

After the raid, Chandra was placed in a Christian home of refuge where she received the support and care she needed for healing.

Source: International Justice Mission (1999)

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Questions or suggestions? If you have a case study you would like to share, please email influence@viva.org.