The Youth Community of Practice (YCoP) global listserv links professionals and practitioners at USAID and its partner organizations to effective youth development ideas, information and best practices to help:

* Design more effective, sustainable youth programs, and
* Better integrate youth participation in USAID development projects

In this Links: Protecting the Labor Rights of Working Children and Youth
Article 32 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that children and youth under the age of 18 have the right “to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.” Despite this declaration, children and youth around the world are exploited and labor under unsafe conditions — as restavèks, porters, stone quarry workers, weavers, factory workers, and more. This issue of YCoP Links features organizations and resources that seek to raise awareness about child and youth labor issues and rights, in addition to helping the child and youth laborers escape or alleviate their hazardous working environments.

Announcements:

Children’s Rights at a Cross-Roads: A Global Conference on Research and Child Rights
http://www.childlabour.net/ (IREWOC home page)
International Research on Working Children (IREWOC) is accepting registration for a conference on children’s rights in November/December 2009, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The conference’s primary goal is to promote “a framework for the global collaborative development of a knowledge base for the realization of children’s rights.” Policymakers, young people, researchers, and practitioners will have opportunities to address research strategy regarding the fight for children’s rights, develop models for child participation in research, and share best practices.

Projects and Initiatives:

The Concerned for Working Children
http://www.workingchild.org/
Located in India, The Concerned for Working Children (CWC) envisions and works towards a world in which children do not have to work; however, recognizing the current reality, CWC “empowers working children so that they may be their own first line of defence [sic] and participate in an informed manner in all decisions concerning themselves.” Child and youth participation in programming is the cornerstone of CWC’s programs. They have facilitated a children’s union for children and youth below 18 years of age, and youth who outgrow the children’s union can join Namma Sabha, a union for young workers and artisans. The organization has created a number of other ways for children and youth to advocate for their labor rights, including a labor rights task force, village children’s councils, and training centers where government officials and other parties can learn how to improve their working
relationships with children and youth. The Concerned for Working Children also conducts research, and many resources and publications can be found on the organization’s website.

**Visayan Forum Foundation**  

Visayan Forum Foundation (VF) primarily focuses on marginalized migrants, particularly trafficked women, children, and youth and domestic workers. Located in the Philippines, VF’s activities include advocacy campaigns, direct service provision, and community-based prevention programs. The organization’s Kasambahay Program, for example, provides direct services such as medical, legal, and psychosocial help for child and youth domestic workers; those who are abused or trafficked can move in to VF’s temporary shelters, where they can learn life skills and participate in income-generation activities while waiting to be reintegrated into their families or foster programs. The program also collaborates with school administrators and government officials to help child and youth domestic workers combine work and study and to advocate for protective policies and laws, respectively. VF has supported the creation of Bantay Bata sa Komunidad, an advocacy organization made up of more than 2,000 child and youth workers and advocates, and Child Laborers and Advocates for Social Participation (CLASP), a nationwide organization created by Filipino youth in response to the Global March on Child Labor in March 1997. VF has recently partnered with MTV for the War Against Human Trafficking Campaign.

**Concern for Children and Environment**  

Concern for Children and Environment (CONCERN), located in Nepal, supports and rehabilitates underprivileged and working children and youth, particularly porters and those who work in stone quarries. Established in 1993, the organization runs centers where child and youth workers can receive nonformal education, vocational training (for youth over 14 years old), and medical services, and some are eventually able to return to formal education. They also have an emergency shelter for displaced children and youth who are potential victims of exploitation. CONCERN has ensured that children and youth are consulted before and throughout program implementation by forming children’s clubs in schools and in its nonformal education classes at the centers. CONCERN also advocates and raises awareness on issues of education, children’s literacy, children’s participation, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

**Courageous Women**  
[http://www.matenwa.org/CourageousWomen/index.htm#Representation](http://www.matenwa.org/CourageousWomen/index.htm#Representation)  

Established in 2000, Courageous Women is a women’s group that works on La Gônave, an island off the coast of Haiti. Courageous Women aims to improve the situation of women, children, and youth and to combat Haiti’s restavèk (“stay with”) system generally considered tantamount to modern-day slavery. Restavèks, or child or youth domestic workers, are frequently abused, seldom fed, subject to long working hours, and rarely allowed to attend school. Courageous Women uses popular theatre and music and trainings to educate La Gônave women, children, and youth about their rights and to create a community dialogue about their issues. The organization strives to form clubs for women who seek alternative forms of disciplining and treating their children and restavèks. The organization plans to devote more than three-fourths of its current budget to assist restavèk children and youth. A 2005 publication called “Airwaves to Courage” offers an in-depth look at the founders of Courageous Women and their work (see link above).
Resources for Practitioners:

**International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour**

The International Labour Organization (ILO) created the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) in 1992, to strengthen the capacity of participating countries to combat child labor and to advocate globally for the end of child labor and slavery practices. IPEC currently works in 88 countries across the world, promoting policy reform, raising awareness about child labor conventions, and building the capacity of institutions. The program’s website contains a host of resources, ranging from training manuals (e.g., child labor monitoring guides, resource kits for policymakers) to child labor statistics and country reports.

**Give Girls a Chance – Tackling Child Labour, a Key to the Future**

Published in June by the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labor, this seminal report gives an in-depth analysis of “the international legal framework as it relates to child labor and children’s rights,” as they specifically relate to girls. Girls aged 5-17 years old account for approximately 46 percent of child workers, according to the report. The lengthy document describes why girls are particularly vulnerable to the child labor and exploitation (including the Worst Forms of Child Labor), different types of labor (e.g., agricultural, domestic, sexual exploitation), and how and why investing in the education of girls can remedy the problem. The report devotes an entire chapter to adolescent girls and the youth labor market, describing their problems and their opportunities. *Give Girls a Chance* also provides numerous global statistics on girls and child labor, including, for example, the female youth labor force participation rate.

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**Looking for YOUR input:** We would like to hear from you! YCoP welcomes ideas, resources, and best practices on effective youth programs and youth participation. We would also like to encourage nominations of other youth practitioners or youth leaders to participate in the YCoP Links listserve. Hit “reply” to send information and feedback to YCoP Links.

To unsubscribe from the list, users should send an e-mail to listserv@info.usaid.gov with only “unsubscribe youthcop” in the body of the e-mail. (No signatures please).

**Mission of YCoP:** The Youth Community of Practice provides a forum for professionals and practitioners at USAID and its partner organizations to gather, consolidate, archive, disseminate and exchange information, knowledge, ideas and best practices, particularly related to the incorporation of youth participation in USAID development projects. The Youth Community of Practice is an informal body of volunteer members, reached through a global list serve and Washington-based chapter. Both the list serve and DC chapter forums include USAID staff, youth practitioners outside of the Agency, and youth themselves. It is jointly sponsored by the office of education in the bureau of Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade (EGAT) at USAID and the Education Quality Improvement Program3 (EQUIP3), and implemented by the Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC).

**Disclaimer:** The information and opinions expressed in the materials provided through YCoP Links or posted by listserv participants is not official U.S. Government information and does not necessarily represent the views or positions of the U.S. Agency for International Development, the U.S. Government or EQUIP3. For a copy of the guidelines and/or charter, put the request in the subject line of the email and send to: youthcop@lists.info.usaid.gov. Participants should be aware that the list is public and not private communication. When participants voluntarily disclose personal information on a list serve, that information can be collected and used by others and may result in unsolicited messages from other people.