

Schedule of Activities for Child Laborers turned Activists
during Global Action Week, April 24-30, 2006
Hosted by the International Center on Child Labor
and Education, Washington, DC



Monday, April 24

Visit Holton-Arms School, Bethesda, MD

Time: 10:10-1:10

Tuesday, April 25

Meeting with Legislative Staff of Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA)

Time: 11:00a.m.-11:30a.m.

Visit Montgomery Blair High School, Silver Spring, MD

Time: 12:40-2:10 p.m. and beyond for students from Amnesty International Club

Co-sponsors: Blair Academy of International Studies and ICCLC

Leadership/Lobbying Training

Time: 6:30-8/9:30p.m. working dinner

Wednesday, April 26

Meeting with Legislative staff of Senator Mel Martinez (R-FL)

Time: 11:00a.m. - 11:30a.m.

Telephone interview with Chicago Times

Time: 12-12:30p.m.

Big Hearing, planned and run by all the partners of the US Global Campaign for Education (GCE)

Location: Indian Affairs Committee Room, Russell Senate Office Building (SR485)

Time: 1-3:00p.m. (Reception at 1p.m., Mock Hearing at 2p.m.)

Congressional Cosponsors: Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, Senator Chuck Hagel, Senator Tom Harkin, Congressman Jim Kolbe, Congresswoman Nita Lowey, and Congressman Spencer Bachus

Contact Persons:

Dr. Sudhanshu Joshi

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Beth Lindley

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Tour of Capital, Staff, Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey

Time: 3:15-3:45

Address General Meeting of the Congressional Progressive Caucus

Time: 4:00p.m.-4:45p.m.

Caucus Co-Chairs: Congresswoman Barbara Lee and Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey

Thursday, April 27

Meeting with Legislative Staff of Senator Chuck Hagel (R-NA)

Time: 8:30-9:00a.m.

Interface with Executive Board Members and Staff, Fast Track Initiative, Education Unit and Social Protection Unit, The World Bank

Time: 10-11:30a.m.

Bank Co-hosts: German Executive Director, Indian Executive Director, Social Protection Unit and Education Unit of the World Bank.

Briefing with staff of members of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee

Time: 2:00p.m.

Sponsor: Office of Senator Edward M. Kennedy (D-MA)

Interview with Puran by BBC World Service

Time: 3:30 p.m.

Friday, April 28

Visit UNICEF

Time: 12:00p.m.

Hosts: Executive Director Anne Veneman and Deputy Executive Director Rima Salah

Visit UNDP Headquarters

Time: 1:00p.m. lunch

Host: Ad Melkert, Under-Secretary-General and the Associate Administrator, UNDP

Free-time throughout the week: Fun sight-seeing in Washington, DC, with all its monuments and museums



ICCLE

**The International Center on
Child Labor and Education**

Bios of Child Advocates

Leidy Johanna Moreno Blandon, Columbia

Leidy, 16, is from Columbia. Her mom, 34, is a domestic employee and street vendor of arepas (corn tortillas). Leidy's father died at age 38 in an explosion. Leidy is the oldest of 3 children, and the mother of a baby girl. She has alternated studying and working as a salesgirl in a bakery and a street vendor of obleas (thin wafers) and helping her mother sell arepas (corn tortillas). Leidy is currently dedicated to studying and taking care of her baby. She is in 11th grade. Her basic education will end in December. Afterwards, Leidy would like to go to university and study psychology.

Luz Karime Lemos Viveros, Columbia

Luz, 13, is from Columbia. Her father, 44, works collecting scrap iron. Her mom, 38, has various jobs. Luz is the oldest of 7 children. She has worked from a very young age, helping her parents collect things that people throw away to recycle. Luz is now dedicated to studying and helping her mother take care of her 6 brothers and sisters. Luz is in 7th grade. When she gets older she would like to study to be an architect/builder of houses.

Aly Zayury Perez Hernandez, Mexico

Aly Hernandez, 16, is from Iztapalapa (part of Mexico city), Mexico. She started working as a nanny when she was 14 years old to help her family pay for her school materials, such as books, and her personal expenses. Aly's father is a maintenance man for a business and her mother washes clothes and cleans houses. As a nanny, Aly was on duty more than 12 hours a night, from 9 p.m. until 10 the next morning. She watched a three-year-old boy, got him ready for bed, fed him, bathed him, and gave him medicine throughout the night when he was sick. Aly became a messenger for a paper company. For a little more than a year, she traveled throughout the city, delivering invoices and collecting checks, from noon until 5 or 6 p.m. each day. She went to school from 7:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. before work. If she had homework, she did not go to bed until 11 p.m. or as late as 1 a.m. All the traveling and spending a lot of time on her feet in the sun tired her out. Some afternoons, she returned with sores on her feet after walking to several different places. She was always tired at the end of the day.

Aly stopped working as a messenger because she could not dedicate enough time to school and going for long periods of time without eating affected her health. She also received a scholarship from Fundación UNAM (Universidad Autónoma de México) so that she could stop working. She would like to be a writer, journalist or photographer and travel around the world, meeting people with customs, lives and realities that are different from her own and expressing her thoughts and feelings through words and images. The best way to help child laborers, Aly thinks, is to pay their parents better salaries so that they can see that their children do not need to work, and to provide quality education.

Mohmad Samsur, India

Mohmad Samsur, 13, is from Kachhi Basti, Manoharpura, Jagatpura, Jaipur (Rajasthan). He has four brothers, who are 4, 9, 10 and 15 years old. Samsur's father runs a tea stall and sells garbage collected by rag pickers. His father has completed 8th grade and can read. Samsur's mother is illiterate. She is a domestic worker and helps her husband sort out the garbage to sell. Samsur started working with his friends as a rag (garbage) picker when he was ten years old because his parents and all his neighbors and friends were rag pickers. He collected garbage from McDonalds, Pepsi factory, and Milk Processing Units in Malviyanagar, Jaipur, three hours a day (from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m.), seven days a week for a year. He still has a scar on his foot from stepping on a piece of broken glass while collecting garbage. Samsur also attended school for four hours a day (from noon until 4 p.m.). During his work as a rag-picker, Samsur was addicted to gutka (tobacco) and sometimes used to smoke cigarettes.

Samsur has completed only one year of schooling. He dropped out of school so that he could continue rag-picking throughout the day. One day, Samsur's father met an activist from Bachpan Bachao Andolan (the South Asian Coalition on Child Servitude). The meeting was an eye-opener for his father, who realized his responsibility to work and to send Samsur to school. Without wasting anytime, he sent Samsur to the Bal Ashram, a rehabilitation center run by Bachpan Bachao Andolan. Now, Samsur lives at the Bal Ashram in Viratnagar, Jaipur District (Rajasthan) with other children who have been withdrawn from work and are receiving educational and vocational training. He wants to go to university and become a good painter. Education should be ensured so that all the children can go to school, Samsur says, and adults should be provided with employment. He knows that if children work then they do not have time to play, they are exploited by their employers, they do not receive adequate wages, and they do not have a chance to develop physically and socially to their full potential. "The best way to help child laborers is to make friends with them and persuade them to go to school. Schooling is the most important for children," he says.

Puran Banjara, India

Puran Banjara, 13, is from Village-Salmania, Post-Baroda, Dist-Shyopur, Madhya Pradesh, India. He has 6 brothers and 1 sister. Neither Puran's mother nor his father can read or write. Puran started working with his parents in the stone quarries of Haryana and Rajasthan when he was only 6 years old. He broke stones and loaded them into trucks, and dug pits for underground cable along the road, 11 hours a day (from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m.), 7 days a week for 3 years. More than half the day, he worked on an empty stomach because he had no breakfast. He only had one 15-minute break for lunch at 1:00 p.m. The working conditions were very unhygienic and harsh. Puran still bears a scar on his knee from breaking stones without protective gear.

Puran's father, Devi Ram, was indebted to the owner of the stone quarry for Rs. 20,000 (\$443) for the treatment of Puran's sick grandfather. Even after several years of hard labor, Devi Ram and his family were not allowed by the owner to leave the stone quarries as he was claiming Rs. 45,000 (\$997) with interest on the capital. However, Devi Ram and the family were never paid their wages, except for a lump sum of approximately Rs. 1000 (\$22) for the work of 5 working members of the family to ensure that the family would never be able to never pay off the debt and would remain in bondage forever.

As part of an ongoing campaign to identify and rescue bonded children, one day, activists from the Bal Ashram, a rehabilitation center run by Bachpan Bachao Andolan (the South Asian Coalition on Child Servitude), found Puran and his brothers working in stone quarries. In the process of pursuing the case of Puran and his younger brothers, the activists were able to convince Devi Ram to let Puran and his brothers lead free lives and receive education at the Bal Ashram. Due to the loss of labor from Puran and his younger brothers, the employer filed a case against Devi Ram on false charges and sent him to jail. Eventually, the BBA activists helped in his acquittal.

Puran now lives with other children who have also been victims of child labor and are receiving educational and vocational training at the Bal Ashram in Viratnagar, District-Jaipur (Rajasthan). He is part of the cultural team that performs folk theatre to generate awareness of social issues, including child labor. He participates in demonstrations and marches to highlight prevailing social problems in the local area, and helps organize rallies to enroll out-of-school children in school and design campaigns to boycott fireworks and other products manufactured using child labor.

Puran plays an active role in the implementation of Bal Mitra Gram (child-friendly villages) near the Ashram. He recently completed final exams for 8th grade. Eventually, he would like to attain a higher education and join the army. He wants to become "an army man."

