

Child Labor  
NCA Panel discussion  
Dana Point, CA

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Costa Rica

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# Legal Frame

- 1869, Costa Rica Constitution:
  - Basic public education is free and mandatory
- Costa Rica is part of the United Nations Convention for Childhood Rights (1990)
- 1998, Law #7739: “Childhood and Teenager Code”
  - Legal back up to the Convention

# Legal Frame

- Minimum age for employment is 15 years
  - No hard or risk labor
  - No more than 6 hrs/day
  - Longer period if it is agriculture and ranching
- PANI: Costa Rica National Infancy Bureau
  - Monitors labor and children's rights
- 2006: Avancemos: “conditional cash” program for low income families
  - Children remain or return to school
  - 130,000 beneficiaries (58% rural areas)

# Legal Frame

- CARE: Child Labor Education Initiative
  - Regional program, \$5.7 MM
  - Government and civil society
- ILO (International Labor Org. Standards)
  - Program to strengthen the Labor Ministry to prevent and combat the worst forms of child labor
  - Phase III regional project to eradicate child labor in Latin America

# Cultural Frame

- Costa Rica Coffee Industry: base of country's social and economic development for over 200 years
- Coffee picking: additional income for families
- Social and cultural event
  - Children: responsibility, belonging

# Cultural Frame

- Costa Rica:
  - 92 % small holders
  - 160,000 workers during harvest season
  - 50% pickers are foreigners (Nicaragua and indigenous from Panama)
  - Single workers and families (migrant and local)
  - Farms provide housing
  - School vacation period: December-February

# Cultural Frame

- Children involved during harvest season:
  - No hard labor
  - Family event
  - Additional income
  - Not forced labor
  - Safety issues
  - Cultural issues (Gnobe Indigenous)



# Programs

- Day care centers
  - Farms
  - Local towns, school infrastructure (Cooperative/Government)
- Incentive plan for mothers
  - Infants (0-8 years)
  - Supplies (food, diapers, clothing, etc)
- Three party programs: Farmers, Government/NGOs, Consumer





“Al Día” Costa Rica newspaper  
February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2010  
San Gabriel de Tarrazú, Costa Rica

Rosa Zeledón and her son Christian  
First day of school

