

Independent Final Evaluation of

## **DESTINO, Panama Education Initiative Project**

Creative Associates International, Inc.  
USDOL Cooperative Agreement Number: E-9-K-4-0047

### **FINAL REPORT**

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**APRIL 2008**

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- Annex 1: List of People Interviewed  
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## ACRONYMS

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CAI	Creative Associates International, Inc.
CAIF	Centros de Atención Infantil en Finca (Comprehensive Attention Centers on Farms)
CCDI	Centro de Capacitación y Desarrollo Integral (Comprehensive Training and Development Center)
CE	Casa Esperanza
CEC	Community Education Center
CETIPPAT	Comité para la Erradicación del Trabajo Infantil y Prevención de la Persona Adolescente Trabajadora (Commission for the Elimination of Child Labor and the Protection of the Adolescent Worker)
EI	Child Labor Education Initiative
EPA	Escuela Primaria Acelerada (Accelerated Primary School)
FTN	Fundación Tierra Nueva
IFAD	Darien Agricultural Forest Institute
ILO	International Labor Organization
IPEC	International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
OCFT	Offices of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking
PMP	Performance Monitoring Plan
USDOL	U.S. Department of Labor

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The DESTINO project was implemented by Creative Associates International, Inc. (CAI) between August 2004 and August 2008 in the rural areas of the provinces of Chiriquí, Coclé, Veraguas, Herrera, Los Santos, and Darien as well as the native regions of Ngobe-Buglé and Emberá. CAI collaborated with three Panamanian nongovernmental organizations: Casa Esperanza, Centro de Capacitación y Desarrollo Integral, and Fundación Tierra Nueva. The project's goal was to withdraw some 2,420 children under age 17 from work and prevent another 675 from working. To achieve this, the project implemented strategies targeting social awareness, schooling for children, and improvements in the quality of the education they receive.

The project helped strengthen the country's capacity to fight child labor through the creation of three educational innovations: Community Education Centers, Comprehensive Attention Centers on Farms, and Accelerated Primary Education.

The Community Education Centers proved effective as a complement to children's school learning and, in combination with other measures, demonstrated potential for averting children's migration to the coffee fields, thus keeping them in school. Furthermore, they effectively reduced the number of hours children work during the week. Nevertheless, they were not able to offset other variables affecting child labor. In many cases, especially with teenagers, these variables played a role in the decision of a high percentage of children to leave the centers.

In the short term, the Comprehensive Attention Centers on Farms were effective at preventing children from working on farms. Nevertheless, in the medium and long terms this strategy appears ineffective for the following reasons: (1) It facilitates the migration of native families to farms, thus perpetuating a situation that seriously affects child development; (2) it does not solve the problems of late enrollment or early school abandonment; (3) It is not part of the school system and, therefore, its sustainability is weak; and (4) It does not target the children's post-harvest labor and educational conditions when they return to their communities.

Accelerated Primary Education was effective at schooling teenagers who were behind in their educational development and overage, although it does require other complementary actions to eradicate hazardous work. The project convinced the Ministry of Education to make the accelerated model official, finance the operation of seven existing centers in 2008, and replicate them in other parts of the country in 2009.

The project, moreover, created a blueprint for educational training that might significantly contribute to improving the knowledge and skills of public school teachers.

The project achieved all four of its proposed outcomes, although it fell short of its eradication/prevention goals. Of the 3,095 children targeted in the logical framework, the last Technical Progress Report in March 2008 indicates that only 1,844 children (60%) have been withdrawn from work or averted from working. Half of the remaining 40 percent stayed with the program, but were not withdrawn from work; the other half dropped out. The educational innovations that did not meet established goals were the Community Education Centers and Accelerated Primary Education. In large part, this is caused because the project overestimated the demand that exists in the communities.

The primary reason behind the problems facing the project is that its operational strategies did not properly take into account the complexity of the intervention. In turn, this negatively affected the efficiency and effectiveness of the project's actions. These ineffective strategies include (1) the geographical dispersion of the communities where the project worked, (2) the decision to implement education innovations in a way that isolates its components, and (3) a service-oriented rather than a community-oriented approach. Additionally, the project was affected by controversies within its implementing organizations, specifically in terms of administration and monitoring.

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## PROJECT CONTEXT AND DESCRIPTION

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To understand the achievements and limitations of the project in obtaining its target outcomes, as well as its contribution to reducing child labor in Panama, it is necessary to briefly review some of the aspects of the social and institutional context. These aspects refer to (1) the socioeconomic situation of the native communities where the project worked; (2) the institutional capacity of governmental and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs); and (3) the management capacity of community organizations.

The situation of Panama's native communities is characterized by extreme poverty and social exclusion. In this regard, child and teenage labor is as much a form of socialization as it is of survival. In communities where there are no schools or schools are kilometers away, work is the only formative activity that children have. Furthermore, the custom still persists among some teenagers of forming families at a young age, such as at 15 years old. At this age, parents believe that their children are already adults. In addition, many entire families migrate to coffee, melon, onion, and sugar cane farms at harvest time, since it is the only source of income they have during the year. The roadway infrastructure of these communities is precarious and lacks basic services.<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, the management capacity of governmental and nongovernmental organizations to tackle the problem of child labor is low. Even though the Commission for the Elimination of Child Labor was created in the 1990s, it has only been on stable footing since 2006, and its most active members are governmental institutions. There are a few NGOs dedicated to child labor, but almost all are small and have limited resources.

Native organizations have low capacity for mobilization and self-management, mitigating their contribution to projects being carried out in native regions. Even though there is a new generation of natives with secondary and higher education, leadership is still weak. In addition, the presence of institutions to bolster the management capacity of these organizations is limited.

All of these factors form a scenario of low institutional capacity in which human resources, methods of intervention, and managerial skill are still in their early phases of development, thus hindering the creation of synergies among the governmental and nongovernmental institutions dedicated to improving the quality of life of children in the country.

### Project Description

The DESTINO project was implemented by CAI between August 2004 and August 2008 in the rural areas of the provinces of Chiriquí, Coclé, Veraguas, Herrera, Los Santos, and Darien, as well as the native regions of Gnobe-Buglé and Emberá. CAI partnered with three Panamanian NGOs: Casa Esperanza (CE), Centro de Capacitación y Desarrollo Integral (CCDI), and Fundación Tierra Nueva (FTN). The project's goal was to withdraw some 2,420 children under age 17 from work and prevent another 675 from working. To achieve this, the project implemented strategies targeting schooling for children and improvements in the quality of the education they receive. Concurrently, it worked to raise awareness among parents, teachers, and other important actors.

The project's aim, intended purpose, and outcomes were the following:

**Aim.** The number of child laborers that work in agriculture in the rural areas of Panama is reduced.

**Direct purpose.** Increased enrollment in the educational centers of the program reaching the

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<sup>1</sup> One indicator that illustrates the difficult situation of the native population is the illiteracy rate, which approaches 48 percent in the population over age 15; in the rest of the Panamanian population, it is approximately 8 percent.

goal, increased retention, and completion among rural children who work in the agricultural sector by direct measurement.

**Indirect purpose.** Increased enrollment, retention, and completion in formal schools among rural children who work in the agricultural sector by indirect measurement.

**Outcome 1.** Awareness raised about the effects of child labor on the Right to Education , among the following key actors in the project areas: (1) parents and community leaders, (2) educators, and (3) Agro businessmen.

**Outcome 2.** Formal and alternative educational systems promote better educational opportunities for child laborers and families.

**Outcome 3.** Child Labor Education Plan developed from intersectorial input coordinated by organizations that support the project.

**Outcome 4.** Government regulations and budget mechanisms assuring sustainability of educational initiatives to combat child labor are established.

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## ASSESSMENT GOALS

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The goals of the project's final assessment are—

- To help implementing organizations identify the strong performance areas of the project and areas where performance can improve
- To support the Offices of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking in their efforts to identify what works and what does not work when conceptualizing and designing projects
- To assess to what degree the project's objectives are met
- To evaluate the project's progress in terms of children's labor and educational situations.

To achieve these objectives, the following aspects of the project's design and implementation will be discussed:

- Project design and implementation
- Coordination and alliances
- Management and budget
- Sustainability and impact.

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## METHODOLOGY AND SCOPE OF EVALUATION

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An assessment was done by implementing the following steps:

1. Perform document analysis and preparations for project visits.
2. Gather information in areas of project implementation.
3. Hold meetings with the people involved with the project.
4. Write the draft report.
5. Have the draft report reviewed and commented on by the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) and the stakeholders involved with the project.
6. Write the final report.

### Information-Gathering Techniques

Four techniques were used to collect information: document analysis, interviews with qualified informants, focus groups, and field visits.

**Document analysis.** The following documents were analyzed: Project Document, Cooperative Agreement, Solicitation of Grant Applications, Management Procedures and Guidelines, Progress Reports, Technical and Financial Reports, Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP), Work Plan, various research reports, and other documents concerning the project.

**Interviews.** Interviews were conducted with the following people:

- CAI staff who implemented the project
- Directors and field staff of the NGOs that co-implemented the project: CE, CCDI, and FTN
- Representatives of the Ministries of Education and of Labor
- Representatives of the International Labor Organization (ILO) International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor (IPEC)
- Representatives of the National Childhood and Adolescents Support Network
- Representatives of the Commission for the Elimination of Child Labor and the Protection of the Adolescent Worker (CETIPPAT)
- Representatives of coffee and sugar companies.

**Focus groups.** Focus groups were conducted with—

- Beneficiaries of revenue-generating projects
- Children participating in tutorials or in accelerated education
- Parents of children participating in Community Education Centers (CEC) and Accelerated Primary Education (EPA)
- Teachers of the schools working with the project.

**Field visits.** Visits were made to the communities working with the project in the provinces of Chiriquí, Veraguas, and Darien, and the native regions of Gnobe-Buglé and Emberá.

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## EVALUATION FINDINGS

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### Design Analysis

The project was designed to achieve the four objectives of the USDOL Child Labor Educational Initiative (EI), and it adequately complemented the educational programs of the Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Education as well as the activities to eliminate child labor being carried out by CETIPPAT. Furthermore, it justifiably focused its efforts on primary education, since there are serious problems in native communities with scholastic performance, repetition, desertion, and overage among children under 14, which all have a direct impact on the continuity of child labor. In addition, the educational proposals implemented by the project are in keeping with the prospective curriculum and methodology of the Ministry of Education.

Moreover, the design envisaged the project's coordination with governmental and nongovernmental organizations involved with the elimination of child labor, thus ensuring that its work could be carried out with their own. It also establishes as one of its outcomes the drafting of the educational component of the Child Labor Elimination Plan—a strategic element to the national policy of the CETIPPAT.

The proposal developed by CAI addressed the main problems and needs that working children face. Furthermore, it adequately identified the principal challenges of the communities where the project would be implemented. Nevertheless, the operational strategies adopted by the project did not adequately take into account the complexity of its intervention, resulting in a negative impact on the effectiveness and efficiency of its actions. These ineffective operational strategies include (1) the geographical dispersion of the communities where the project worked, (2) the decision to implement education innovations in a way that isolates its components, and (3) a service-oriented rather than community-oriented approach. About the first point, the project opted to work in five provinces and two native regions, covering a broad territory that stretches from the border of Costa Rica to the border of Colombia. In addition, the project worked in more than 50 communities, in each one attending to groups of children of different sizes. Many of these communities were located in hard-to-access areas; some could only be reached on foot or by boat.

All of these factors presented operational difficulties and significant logistical challenges in all areas of the project, mitigating the effectiveness and efficiency of its implementation. Although all the areas and communities chosen met the necessary criteria for the project, fewer provinces could have been selected, thereby restricting the geographic area. This would have made it possible to better arrange the activities and implement them more efficiently.

The second strategic decision that seemed inappropriate was the decision to implement educational innovations without seeking synergies between them. The CECs, EPA centers, CAIFs, and teacher training were implemented in different communities and even provinces. Although all of the innovations addressed different problems and, therefore, complemented one another, no community benefited from all of them at the same time. The most noteworthy case was the training of teachers in the province of Darien, where the project had no direct beneficiaries.<sup>2</sup> Conversely, the majority of schools where the CECs operated did not benefit from teacher training.

The third strategic decision that influenced the outcomes of the project was to opt for a service-oriented rather than community-oriented approach. This meant that the project's unit of intervention was the service offered through the different educational innovations and not the communities. Yet, the characteristics of the problems and of the population required a community-oriented approach. This is made evident when analyzing the problem of native communities' seasonal migration to work in the coffee harvest. Migration is a strategy of collective survival whose origin and dynamic stem

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<sup>2</sup> In this province, there were only 15 direct beneficiaries (teenagers in Darien's Agricultural Forest Institute with grants from Fundación Tierra Nueva).

from the socioeconomic conditions of these communities; thus it requires an intervention that affects these conditions. The project addressed this problem by providing a service (CAIF) without taking into account the work and educational activities of the children during the rest of the year when they live in their communities and not on farms.

We must add that the project overestimated the demand for the CECs and EPAs. The result was the establishment of coverage goals that the project could not meet, as we will show in the educational innovation outcome assessment.

These strategies caused the efforts of the project to be spread too thin and prevented the creation of synergies among the educational innovations. As we will see later, this explains in part the challenges the project faced to meet the goals of the second outcome.

## Outcome Analysis

### A. Outcome 1

The project sought to raise awareness about the negative effects of child labor on education among the following key actors: (1) parents and community leaders, (2) teachers, and (3) farm owners.

In the focus groups, it was observed that parents were aware of the importance of their children's education and of the negative effects of child labor on school attendance and student performance. This achievement is particularly significant in native communities, especially since school absenteeism has traditionally been high partly because parents put work before school.

Moreover, parents and community leaders have stated that their children do not work and that child labor is prohibited. According to the testimony of field staff, at the beginning of the project, the same parents stated that their children worked and that school attendance was not a priority. Unfortunately, this change in discourse was not only caused by greater awareness of the problem but also to parents' fear of losing the economic subsidies they receive from governmental institutions to send their children to school.

As we will demonstrate later, registration seems to have increased in the schools where CECs have operated. This increase is the result of several factors, including greater awareness among parents of the importance of education.

We also observed among teachers greater awareness of the effects of child labor on education. Many acknowledged that the project helped them realize that child labor was a significant obstacle that prevented their students from attending class and doing their schoolwork.

Among farm owners, the project did not have a homogeneous effect. One group of owners actively supported and helped the project install CAIFs on their properties; another groups refused to do so, believing that the project's goals were inappropriate. The first group is primarily made up of owners with a more modern vision of farming, more in keeping with the concepts of social and environmental responsibility. The other group is composed of older farmers with a conservative view of how business should be done. In any case, the project's public awareness activities highlight the topic of child labor, thus helping to make the problem visible. Nevertheless, the project did not work with producers' associations—a decision that prevented it from including more owners and making its actions more sustainable.

In addition to the activities conducted with the groups mentioned, the project launched a communications strategy in the mass media (radio, television, and print) and achieved good results. This strategy allowed the project to highlight the problem of child labor in farming to the entire country—a topic that until then was largely unknown. CE's prestige in Panama and the creativity of this strategy were factors that contributed to its success.

## B. Outcome 2

The project sought to establish traditional and alternative educational systems to nurture greater educational opportunities for working children and their families. This result is the heart of the project and required the most human and financial resources. The following table summarizes the characteristics of the three educational innovations implemented by CE.

**Main Characteristics of the Educational Innovations**

	<b>Community Education Center (CEC)</b>	<b>Comprehensive Attention Centers on Farms (CAIF)</b>	<b>Accelerated Primary School (EPA)</b>
<b>Objective</b>	Ensure the academic success of children in schools and prevent them from working.	Withdraw children working on farms.	Offer primary education to overage working children.
<b>Target population</b>	Working children who attend primary school.	Children older than 4 years who work on farms or who are at risk of working.	Working children who have dropped out of school or who are overage
<b>Aim</b>	1,395 children.	1,300 children.	400 children.
<b>Components</b>	Scholastic reinforcement Recreation Nutrition School supplies Uniforms.	Daily care Scholastic reinforcement Recreation Nutrition.	Primary education Nutrition School supplies Uniforms Transportation (some).
<b>Relationship with education system</b>	Works within a school center and promotes children's academic success according to the official curriculum. There is no administrative relationship with the school.	None.	This has been made official by the Ministry of Education for overage children.
<b>Area of operation</b>	Public school classrooms.	Farm sites.	Several locations.
<b>Working hours</b>	Mornings or afternoons, depending on the child's school schedule.	All day during the harvest season.	Every morning during the school year.

In addition to these educational innovations, the project carried out specific activities for the province of Darien, consisting of teacher-training workshops and grants for teenagers for the Darien Agricultural Forest Institute (IFAD). Furthermore, two projects were implemented to increase the families' income: One in the Emberá communities (Darien) and another in the Gnobe-Buglé communities.

The effect of these activities on reducing child labor and improving children's education will now be discussed.

### *Community Education Centers*

This innovation comes from CE's extensive experience with its *Centros de Educación Integral*,<sup>3</sup> where it established the curriculum and materials to reinforce and complement the schooling of working children in urban centers. The institution adapted this experience to the needs of this project

<sup>3</sup> Casa Esperanza has seven Centros de Educación Integral in different cities in Panama, through which it attends to some 1,500 working children of different ages using its own resources.

and of the target population in rural areas. The CECs operate in school classrooms during mornings or afternoons, depending on the child's school schedule. They hire one or two trained educators for the project, each of whom will work with a maximum of 25 children. Many of these educators belong to the same community and speak the native language. This has helped foster a strong relationship and good communication with the children and their parents.

Given the varying sizes of the communities where the project operates, the proportion of children receiving attention, compared with the total number of children who require these services, varies considerably. The selection of beneficiaries was coordinated between the project's promoters and community leaders, using a questionnaire that took into account children's working and educational situations. Nevertheless, in some cases there were more children that fit the profile to receive benefits than the project helped. In the largest communities, many children who needed attention were left out of the program.

Although CECs have no administrative relationship with the schools, focus groups revealed that teachers appreciate the work of the centers, because in their view it makes their jobs easier with the students with the most difficulties. Furthermore, they believe that the centers nurture the children's desire to learn, while helping them to improve their academic performance, thus solidifying their will to attend school on a continuous basis.

On this point, it bears mentioning that the project conducted workshops to raise awareness with all the teachers of the schools where the CECs were installed. These workshops quickly informed the teachers about the project's objectives and raised their awareness about the negative effects of child labor on children's education. In doing so, the project earned the schools' support for the centers.

For their part, parents also expressed that the centers have nurtured in their children a desire to learn and attend school. They indicated, moreover, that they now encourage their children to go to school because they have realized their kids are indeed learning.

Although no information exists about registration rates in the schools before and after the program's intervention, the director of one of the schools we visited indicated that, since the CECs were installed there, the number of registered children has increased every year.<sup>4</sup> Some 340 children registered in 2005, 380 in 2006, 434 in 2007, and 586 in 2008, amounting to a 72 percent increase in 3 years. Furthermore, teachers indicated that the majority of children now begin and finish the school year because of the significant reduction in the number of students who leave school to work in the coffee harvest.

This change, however, cannot be attributed to the program alone. Other reasons appearing to have contributed to the increase in registration and decrease in dropout rates are: (1) the food provided by the government school nutritional program; (2) the transfer of money on behalf of the Network of Opportunities government program, which stipulates children must attend school; and (3) the Institute for Human Resources Training and Development academic grants distributed by the program to children who participate in the center. We must recall that, in addition to academic activities, the CECs also provide children with food, school supplies, and uniforms. The sum of this series of assistance appears to factor more into family decisions than the income children could possibly earn during the coffee harvest.

The combination of the incentives mentioned, with the positive effect that children's academic success has on the perception of their parents about the usefulness of education might have played a role in some families' decision not to migrate, thus preventing their children from working on farms. Nevertheless, the project did not gather information on the differences in registration in the communities where CECs were installed. Therefore, it is impossible to make inferences about the effects of the project on the community's social fabric.

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<sup>4</sup> Boca de Jebay School.

Regarding the reduction of child labor, the CECs produced positive results in two ways: (1) by preventing children from migrating to the coffee harvest and (2) by preventing children from working evenings in family farming activities. As the following table demonstrates, however, withdrawal rates were barely 52 percent.<sup>5</sup>

**Table 1: CEC Removals, Preventions, and Deserters**

Category	Successes	Percentage of total enrolled	Percentage of all children who finished	Percentage of entire goal (successes/1,375)
Withdrawn/prevented	640	52%	79%	47%
Non-withdrawn/prevented	166	13%	21%	
Subtotal (children who finished)	806		100%	59%
Deserters	430	35%		
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,236</b>	<b>100%</b>		<b>90%</b>

Source: Project Database

Draft: Same

The data reveals three problems: (1) a high percentage of child deserters—children who registered in the CECs but did not continue their enrolment, (2) a visible percentage of children who were not withdrawn from work, and (3) performance falling short of the goal. There are two reasons for the percentage of non-withdrawn from work: (1) a group of children continued to work for at least 5 hours a day on weekends when there were no project activities and (2) another group of children did not attend at least 70 percent of the CEC sessions.<sup>6</sup>

The following reasons for the high percentage of deserters were established: According to project surveys, one out of every three children who left the CECs were between ages 12 and 17, and the majority of them indicated that they had no interest in the project. This is understandable, given that the centers focus on children under 12 and on reinforcing the education they receive in primary school. The CECs are not designed for teenagers. Furthermore, another 33 percent said they lived very far from the school or had moved to another area. In fact, many communities do have very spread out settlement patterns that can make it difficult for children to attend school and, by extension, the CECs.

Little coverage of the goal is not only related to the proportion of children withdrawn or prevented from working, but to the number of enrolled children. This suggests that there was not as much demand as the project expected, or that the supply strategy was not appropriate; it was probably a case of both. As for demand, although the project installed the planned number of CECs (31 communities), some of these communities did not have the number of children the project anticipated (25). By contrast, in the larger communities with more children, the project was only able to provide services to a maximum of 50.

In any case, the project did not correctly estimate the demand and was not capable of reformulating its service supply strategy to bring it in line with reality. This leads to the hypothesis that the project's approach focused on service and not on the community, thus hindering its ability to adapt to the conditions of the area where it was working. These conditions, moreover, varied significantly from those present in urban areas, where CE had acquired the majority of its experience.

In short, the CECs proved effective as a complement to children's school learning, and, in combination with other measures, demonstrated potential for preventing children from migrating to

<sup>5</sup> The information provided by the project refers to December 2007; therefore, it may differ from the last Technical Progress Report, which is from March 2008.

<sup>6</sup> This is one of the project's criteria for defining a child as withdrawn.

the coffee fields, thus helping to keep them in school. Furthermore, they were effective at reducing the number of hours children work during the week. Nevertheless, the project failed to accurately gauge the existing demand in the communities and did not know how to tailor its supply to actual conditions, which in turn contributed to its failure to meet the coverage target.

### *Comprehensive Attention Centers on Farms (CAIF)*

The CAIFs are centers located on coffee, sugar cane, and onion farms. They exist for children between ages 4 and 14, who attend them Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. They operate on sites built or fitted out by the farms' owners and are open during the approximately 4-month harvest seasons, from November to March, depending on the crop. Family migration entails that children leave school before the end of the school year, which runs from March to December, and that they arrive late for the following year.

The centers' tutors are education students in their last year of university, trained for the project. Each center has the capacity to attend to 50 children with 2 tutors (i.e., 25 per instructor). The centers offer recreational activities, nutrition, and academic reinforcement. Unlike the CECs, which were adapted from urban to rural settings, CE already had experience with CAIFs. Before undertaking this project, it had already implemented 13 of these centers on coffee farms. The CAIFs are not tied to any school, nor do they award any type of officially recognized learning certificate, which subtracts from their formal value.

The children who attend the CAIFs belong to families that migrate from native communities to work in the harvest of agricultural products. Many families work on different farms, not only from one year to the next, but during the same season. Therefore children who attend the centers belong to different communities and can change from one center to another.

The CAIFs were created to remove children from the harvests and providing them with educational services while their parents work, an objective that appears to have been met. However, interviewed farm owners reported that during the last season they observed children working in the fields, either because they had been placed in charge of children under age 4<sup>7</sup> who are not accepted in the centers, or because they were teenagers who resisted leaving work.<sup>8</sup> This indicates that it would benefit the centers to place someone in charge of caring for smaller children and strengthening the work with farm owners, foremen, and families to discourage teenagers from working. However, this last point ignores the cultural standard that a 16-year-old boy is already a man and is obligated to work as an adult. This is why it would have been advantageous to identify alternative, legally acceptable farming jobs or educational activities in the children's original communities.

Contrary to what happened with the CECs, the percentage of deserters in the CAIFs was low, barely registering 2 percent, and the coverage goal was not only met, but surpassed. This is understandable given that the project worked with a very large, focused, and captive population, which is why the supply-demand problems seen with the CECs were not present.

The proportion of eliminated to not eliminated was 3 to 1—a ratio that supports the testimonies of farm owners. However, little is known about the educational and labor activities of the children during the months when they are with their original communities. Even though the project administered a questionnaire to inquire about the children's activities during the entire year, the compiled information was hardly reliable. Therefore, a project team visited a sample of communities during the non-harvest season to conduct a survey. Nevertheless, this activity proved to be very demanding in terms of time and resources, given that the team had to visit a significant number of communities, many of which were located in remote areas; so using this method periodically was discarded.

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<sup>7</sup> Initially, the CAIFs cared for children under age 4, but subsequently and in keeping with USDOL regulations, they only received children at or above this age.

<sup>8</sup> The assessment mission took place at the end of April, when the harvest was over, thus making it impossible to visit the centers.

**Table 2: CAIF Removals, Preventions, and Deserters**

Category	Successes	Percentage of total enrolled	Percentage of all children who finished	Percentage of entire goal (successes/1,300)
Withdrawn/prevented	1,080	67%	69%	83%
Non-withdrawn/prevented	487	30%	31%	
Subtotal (children who finished)	1,567		100%	121%
Deserters	36	2%		
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,603</b>	<b>100%</b>		<b>123%</b>

Source: project database

Draft: same

It bears mentioning that child labor on farms is merely one of the manifestations of a much more complex social phenomenon that stems from the migration of native communities to farms during the harvest season, not only in Panama but Costa Rica as well. The productivity of these farms has depended on the migration of native peoples for several generations. In turn, the family incomes of these communities depend on earning money in cash during these harvests.

This migration incorporates the entire family. Children and adults are exposed to extremely harsh living conditions, above all on sugar-cane plantations: Some live outside, are poorly nourished, and receive no medical attention. Nevertheless, this is their only way to earn money.

In this regard, the project's intervention is barely palliative. Removing children from the harvest fields is important, but the true solution lies in preventing children from migrating to the farms; even if the children do not work, they are still exposed to living conditions that jeopardize their well-being. Preventing family migration means putting into practice a comprehensive strategy, in the medium and long terms, that incorporates the socioeconomic development of native communities and the modernization of agricultural production—measures that are only possible through government intervention and a joint effort involving producers, native organizations, and governmental institutions. Such a strategy goes beyond the project's objectives and resources.

To summarize, CAIFs have proven effective in the short term at preventing children from working on farms. However, in the medium and long terms this strategy alone is ineffective because it (1) facilitates the migration of native families to the farms, thus perpetuating a situation that seriously affects the development of their children; (2) does not address the problems of late enrollment and early school abandonment; (3) is not part of the school system and, therefore, is not very sustainable; and (4) does not address the labor and educational conditions of the children when they return to their original communities after the harvest.

#### *Accelerated Primary School (EPA)*

EPAs offer a flexible primary education curricular method for children who have dropped out of school or are overage. They operate in CE's *Centros de Educación Integral* and, on average, work with 15 children, although they have the capacity for 25. The model was tailored to a model applied in Mexico and acts as a multi-grade school where the teacher works with children of different ages and levels. Students were chosen according to a community census used to gauge the appropriate beneficiaries.

EPAs help children with serious learning problems derived from dropping out and constant repetition who wind up outside of the school system. Over time, they become functional illiterates with no hope of overcoming poverty. The Panamanian educational system does not have a learning alternative for these children.

The parents we interviewed offered testimonies about the enormous difficulties their children faced in regular school and their refusal to continue studying. Academic failure generated a rejection of school in the children and skepticism in their parents. The EPAs were gradually breaking down this resistance by demonstrating that the children were capable of learning. In doing so, parents and children alike began to trust in the learning possibilities offered by the EPAs. Those interviewed said that not only are the children learning, but they are making plans for the future as well.

The project installed 7 EPA centers (one more than the goals indicated) with a total of some 247 registered children. This arrangement, however, was the least successful at meeting its goal of helping 400 children. In this case, the demand was once again apparently misjudged; the project envisioned, on average, the education of 67 children in each center, an excessive number even in the small towns of the rural area where the EPAs operated.

Of the total number of enrolled children, nearly 36 percent dropped out, which is within the normal parameters for this type of project, given that the students have serious learning difficulties and bring with them a complex learning history. Ninety children were transferred to primary schools—a significant achievement that demonstrates the potential of this arrangement as a transitional system between informal and formal schooling. Furthermore, the project succeeded in withdrawing or averting from work nearly 43 percent of the children who remained in the EPAs—also a significant achievement given that the EPAs did not enjoy the assistance of other complimentary measures designed to remove children from labor. However, this educational arrangement only managed to graduate 27 children from primary education.

**Table 3: EPA Removals, Preventions, and Deserters**

Category	Successes	Percentage of total enrolled	Percentage of all children who finished	Percentage of entire goal (successes/400)
Withdrawn/prevented	55	22%	43%	14%
Non-withdrawn/prevented	73	30%	57%	
Subtotal (children who finished)	128		100%	32%
Transferred to formal schools	29	12%		
Deserters	90	36%		
<b>Total</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>100%</b>		<b>62%</b>

Source: project database

Draft: same

The most significant achievement of this innovation stems from its sustainability and future expansion. In fact, once the project managed to develop and validate the methodology and educational materials through this pilot experience, the Ministry of Education made the accelerated model official and has decided to finance the operation of seven existing centers over the present year and replicate them in other parts of the country in 2009. The accelerated model will gradually be incorporated into the Ministry of Education’s educational supply.

*Darien Agricultural Forest Institute (IFAD)*

The project awarded scholarships to 15 teenagers (the goal was 20) in FTN’s IFAD. The institute offers intermediate technical education (grades 10, 11, and 12) in subjects related to sustainable forest management and agricultural and livestock activities. It began operations in 2005. Several sources contributed to its construction, but it was built under the auspices and the drive of the Vicariate of Darien. Its first students graduated in 2008 and included some of the project’s scholarship recipients. In addition, IFAD is one of the four intermediate education centers in the province of Darien—a testament to the province’s lack of educational services and proof of the institute’s importance.

Although the number of beneficiaries is not significant for the project, the grants awarded by DESTINO constituted 20 percent of the total students, which contributed to the launching of the

school. During these years, the institute has begun to consolidate its status as one of the few intermediate education alternatives in the province of Darien and, in the future, may become a national educational blueprint for agricultural subjects. Nevertheless, its contribution to achieving the project's aims and purposes are very modest. There was no connection between the experience of the institute and the educational innovations put into practice by CE, the training of teachers in Darien, and the income-generating projects. It was a totally isolated initiative that confirmed the defects in the project's design.

### *Darien Teacher Training*

The project also trained primary school teachers in the province of Darien. The training was designed to strengthen pedagogical practices in the areas of language and math, while at the same time raising teacher awareness about the negative consequences of child labor. Each one of the modules lasted one week. FTN was in charge of this task, although did have the support of key CAI staff. All of the activities were closely coordinated with the Provincial Directorate of Education.

The project managed to train some 320 teachers, nearly 58 percent of all the teachers in the province, according to the data supplied by provincial education officials. Consulted teachers declared that this was the first time they had received effective training that truly provided them with instruments for working in the classroom. This affirmation was confirmed by one school director and by the Provincial Directorate of Education.

Although the project did not follow up in the classrooms, there is evidence that some teachers and schools are implementing what was taught in the training workshops. Nevertheless, the sustainability of this training appears very limited because of the high turnover of teachers in the province. According to educational authorities, the majority of teachers come from other regions in the country and on average remains in Darien for 3 years. This is mainly caused by the province's relatively low development and transportation problems.

The teacher-training activities in Darien contributed very little to achieving the project's goal. Because no educational innovations (CEC, CAIF, EPA) were implemented in this province and because IFAD is an intermediate educational institution, there was practically no connection between the training of teachers and direct beneficiaries. Although the training was positively received by teachers and educational authorities, it is impossible to establish how much this activity contributed to the elimination and prevention of child labor or the schooling of working children.

### *Improving Family Income*

Initially, the project proposed offering vocational and income-generating training for parents in some Emberá and Gnobe-Buglé communities. The organization tasked with this component was Fundamujer, but it dissociated itself from the project in the first year. CAI decided then to turn this responsibility over to FTN in the communities of Emberá and to CCDI in the communities of Gnobe-Buglé. The FTN worked in five Emberá communities, training woman to weave baskets, a well-known craft in the region, and helping them to sell the product.

On the other hand, CCDI convinced the Ministry of Social Development to commit to building a hostel for housing tourists, which would propel the tourist project and act as the core for community-training activities. The ministry never followed through with the construction, and CCDI was forced to change its training strategy, opting instead for courses in sewing, bread baking, haircutting, and making bamboo furniture.

Both income-generating initiatives are in their developmental phase and will likely take 2 more years before we know if they will be consolidated or not. Additionally, CCDI continues to work in the field, given that it has yet to complete the implementation of its activities. In any case, we can say that the work done by the project has generated community interest and support and that people are working

on the initiatives. Furthermore, the beneficiaries are satisfied with the project's activities and believe that their incomes will improve in the future.

As with the previous cases, the contribution of this component to achieving the project's goal and purposes is weak. None of the communities where this component was implemented enjoyed the educational innovations (CEC, CAIF, EPA); so there were no direct beneficiaries. It is also impossible to know what impact supporting the improvement of family incomes had on child labor and educational activities.

### **C. Outcome 3**

The project proposed producing an educational plan for working children in coordination with the organizations that support it. In this field, the project has achieved the outcome it had hoped for, given that it coordinated the development of the Educational Plan that forms part of the 2007–2011 National Plan to Eradicate Child Labor, created by CETIPPAT, which brings together all governmental and nongovernmental organizations interested in the eliminating this problem.

Although this outcome also envisaged the conformation of an international network on education and child labor, the project preferred to strengthen the CETIPPAT in the area of the former, thus guaranteeing better institutional coordination and greater sustainability for its proposals.

### **D. Outcome 4**

The project proposed establishing governmental regulations and budget mechanisms to ensure the sustainability of the educational initiative against child labor. In this regard, the Ministry of Education has managed to make official EPAs and has generated the necessary financial and human resources to ensure that these centers created by the project continue to operate, with others scheduled to open in 2009. The ministry is developing a project that will be financed by the World Bank; one of its components will be an accelerated school.

The project also coordinated with the Ministry of Labor the inspection of coffee farms—a significant step in monitoring child labor. It also received the pledge of some coffee producers and sugar refineries to continue supporting the CAIFs.

## **Monitoring**

### **A. Important Definitions**

Overall, the monitoring plan is well conceived and addresses the need for information to verify if the project has achieved its goals and purposes. Furthermore, the PMP's definitions are tailored to the stipulations of common USDOL indicators.

The project defines a beneficiary as eliminated if they meet two conditions:

1. That they have not performed dangerous jobs for the full year (determined by a biannual labor status survey).
2. That they attend more than 70 percent of the project's educational services.

School attendance is only a condition for CEC beneficiaries, given that EPAs are a substitute for formal schooling and that CAIFs primarily operate during school vacations.

Furthermore, in the case of the CECs, the project defined a child as "working" if he performed subsistence activities for more than 5 hours a day during the weekend. In the case of the CAIFs, a child was defined as "working" if he worked on the farm, regardless of the number of hours.

The project, however, did not develop its own definition of dangerous child labor, opting instead to use the USDOL definition derived from the 182nd Convention of ILO and national legislation. Nevertheless, given that at the beginning of the program there was no national legislation that defined hazardous jobs in compliance with Article 4 of Convention 182, it would have been wise for the project to draft its own list of such activities, which in addition to seasonal work during the harvest, included other harmful activities, due to their nature or conditions, performed on private farms or at homes. This list could have been included in the labor status survey and would have been very useful at determining if children were performing dangerous jobs or not.

Ministry of Labor Executive Order No. 19 in 2006—on dangerous jobs—was issued 2 years after the project was launched and provides a list of such activities. Paragraph 6 on “outdoor and open-field jobs” states that “it comprises activities, occupations, or tasks related to farming, livestock, poultry farming, or any other job performed in an open field without security and protection.” Pursuant to the wording of the decree, all agricultural and livestock activities performed by persons under 18 shall be considered dangerous, regardless of pay. This definition, however, is not consistent with international legislation that stipulates that subsistence work, under certain conditions, shall not be considered hazardous.

## **B. The Instruments**

The instrument used to gather information on child labor activities compile information about the family, the beneficiary, a list of labor activities (domestic and productive), the schedules, and the periodicity of work. These surveys were conducted by project promoters and the centers’ tutors. They were then reviewed by field coordinators. The data were entered into CE computers, and the files were later sent to CAI, where the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) specialist reviewed the information’s consistency. If errors were detected, coordinators were asked to review the data.

The project also developed an instrument to measure the degree of comprehension of the topics discussed in training workshops directed at teachers and parents. An instrument was also designed to monitor how much tutors applied the project’s established pedagogic procedures (in-class observational guides). The implementation of these instruments presented enormous challenges, both for the field staff and the directors of the institutions, given that it was the first time this type of instrument had been used.

## **C. Reliability of the Information**

Although the project has made serious and repeated efforts to produce reliable information, it is possible that the data do not always reflect reality because of the factors below.

The project’s design did not take into account the complexity of the monitoring tasks and, therefore, did not have sufficient human and financial resources. In fact, the M&E specialist was only hired part-time, but the demands of his job required a full-time position. Furthermore, field coordinators should have received more training and time to conduct their monitoring activities. We must also mention that the geographical dispersion of the communities increased the logistical and administrative work of the field coordinators and promoters. In turn, this hindered efforts to develop close relationships with the beneficiaries and their families, all of which affected their dedication to the monitoring.

There was also a lack of alignment between the CAI and CE in terms of monitoring. Over the duration of the project, multiple and constant disagreements arose over the definitions, instruments, reliability of the information, and the indicators report. Although CE wound up accepting CAI guidelines, its members were not convinced that they were technically suitable.

One of the topics that illustrate these disagreements was over the establishment of the 70 percent attendance requirement in center classes. A disagreement arose over the decision to remove from the

list of beneficiaries any children who participated in a previous project financed by the IPEC.<sup>9</sup> Another disagreement stemmed from the implementation of observational guides in class. In none of these cases was a consensus ever reached. In addition, CE now maintains that the number of beneficiaries and removals was greater than what CAI is reporting. For its part, CAI is stating that the statistics provided by CE were inconsistent and did not stand up to the tests administered by the M&E specialist.

In this regard, the data from the monitoring system was not used to its fullest potential in the administration of the project. In light of the absence of a consensus on the definitions and instruments, gathering information was more of a formality than a tool used to guide action. Likewise, few technical and administrative decisions appear to have been derived from analyzing the evolution of the indicators. Furthermore, there are no summary tables that demonstrate the evolution of the indicators in a clear and simple manner. In spite of the tremendous effort spent on gathering and processing information, this creates the impression that the indicators were mainly used to meet the requirements of USDOL.

Finally, in another set of problems, the information on the beneficiaries of CAIFs does not indicate whether the children stopped working, because, as we mentioned before in the section on educational innovations, the project was unable to follow up with these children in their original communities.

In spite of all these problems, we must stress that CAI and CE took their monitoring activities seriously and took steps to devise suitable instruments, establish appropriate procedures, and present data with the highest degree of reliability. Although the information of the monitoring system is open to doubt, it is important to underscore and analyze the project's experience in this topic, given that doing so will allow us to illustrate the difficulties of implementing a child labor monitoring system in an organizational setting and in such a complex reality.

## Coordination and Alliances

The project's implementing organizations (CAI, CE, FTN, CCDI) established alliances with several other institutions and organizations. In every case, these relations were productive and made the implementation of the project possible. CAI joined forces with CETIPPAT and managed to design the Child Labor Elimination Plan educational chapter. In addition, it exchanged information and coordinated with the Ministries of Education, Social Development, and Labor. It also teamed up with the National Childhood and Adolescence Support Network to produce the chapter on infancy of the nonofficial report on human rights. Furthermore, it shared information and coordinated with ILO-IPEC, primarily in terms of CETIPPAT organized activities.

CE worked closely with the Ministry of Education, cosigning a broad agreement that included activities to raise teachers' awareness about child labor, develop EPAs, and implement a child labor monitoring system. This agreement validated and made official the EPA. CE also forged relationships with farm owners, primarily coffee producers and sugar refinery owners, and received their promise to continue educational services beyond the conclusion of the project.

FTN established close ties with the Provincial Directorate of Education of Darien and earned its support for training a high percentage of the teachers in the province. Furthermore, it established cooperative relations with the native organizations of the communities where it had launched the vocational training and parent awareness programs.

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<sup>9</sup> CAI eliminated from its registration children who benefited from a previous project financed by IPEC. According to CE, the original draft stated that the project would work with such beneficiaries, in view of the ILO project lasting barely 1 year and certain areas needing improvement. This was a topic of debate before the signing of the contract between USDOL and CAI. The lesson learned was that USDOL-backed projects shall not operate in communities where there has been intervention using ILO-IPEC funds.

The CCDI worked with the Ministry of Social Development, with which it cosigned an agreement for the construction of a hostel in Soloy, and with the Ministry of Tourism, which it convinced to include project areas within Panamanian tourist destinations. Additionally, it successfully lobbied the government of the Gnobé-Buglé region to create the Tourism Commission.

The relationship between CAI and local implementing NGOs was productive. Nevertheless, they did face obstacles primarily in two areas: administrative procedures and monitoring. These will be discussed in the following chapter.

## **Management and Administration**

Administrative procedures (mainly the justification of expenditures) were a source of constant controversy between CAI and the three NGOs. From CAI's point of view, the NGOs had trouble adapting their practices to both its and USDOL's administrative requirements, making it necessary to constantly review and reprocess all the paperwork. In the case of CE, its institutional culture apparently diverged from that of CAI, and bringing the two in line proved to be difficult.

In the case of CCDI and FTN, the problem stemmed from two very small organizations without administrative capacity. Rather than working partners, they proved to be organizations in need of support. In fact, the impact of project resources earmarked for IFAD grants was felt more in the improvement of the institution than in the number of teenage beneficiaries.

Furthermore, there was no coordination among the three national NGOs, due in part to the project's design not envisioning a link between the organizations' different components. It was also due to differences in the organizations themselves. As we have said before, while CE is consolidated and specialized in education and child labor, FTN and CCDI are very small organizations who had their first experiences with child labor during this project.

In any case, the absence of cohesion in administrative and monitoring aspects sapped energy from all the organizations. Although each one performed its respective duty in the project, true alliances were not forged between any of them. Once the project was completed, few institutional bonds between them remained.

Although the foundation of the internal coordination and monitoring problems stems from errors in the project's design, problems also arose from the weak management of all implementing organizations. The heads of these different organizations did not have enough strategic vision to perceive the problems inherent to the design and resolve them accordingly.

## **Sustainability**

The sustainability of educational services created by the project (CEC, EPA, CAIF) depends on the economic resources allocated by CE for their continued operation. In the case of the EPAs, sustainability is ensured by the agreements signed with the Ministry of Education and by the willingness of this institution to formalize and expand the coverage of this educational innovation.

In the case of the CAIFs, some coffee producers and sugar refineries have pledged to keep these centers, using their own resources, with the condition that the Ministry of Education supply the tutors. CE will seek funding for others centers. Nevertheless, what is most important looking ahead is the sustainability and expansion of the elimination of child labor as part of the productive practices on farms. This will only be possible through the mobilization of the coffee producers themselves, who in turn will need the support of their unions; government organizations, such as the Ministry of Labor; and NGOs, such as CE. However, this is still a long way off, given that the project did not affect the collective will of producers, but rather only of some of their colleagues.

So far, CEC has managed to raise enough funding to maintain the centers in 16 communities that participated in the project. Likewise, two more communities will benefit from the support of ProNiño [Pro-Child], an initiative backed by a telephone company, and two others will receive support from governmental institutions. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education has included in one of its projects a component for academic reinforcement using a methodology similar to that of the CECs, and the Ministry of Labor will implement a child labor eradication project in the cities of Panama and Colón using CE methodology. Although these projects do not allocate funds for the CECs, the methodology developed therein is expected to be used in other areas of the country. Over the medium term, it would benefit the CE to systematize the experience and develop a tighter link between this educational innovation and the school system.

The sustainability of training teachers in Darien is dubious, because it depends on factors that have always been outside of the scope of the project, such as following up with teachers in the classrooms and teacher turnover. The Provincial Directorate of Education does not systematically and continuously monitor teacher performance. Furthermore, high teacher turnover implies that in a few more years there will be a large number of teachers trained by the project who no longer lend their services to Darien schools.

Regarding income-generating projects, predicting their future is difficult. As we said before, they are still in a developmental phase. Nevertheless, even if they were successful, it is unlikely that they would become the foundation of a family dynamic that mitigates or eliminates child labor, because in these communities the project paid scant attention to other contributing factors, such as the quality of education and cultural practices.

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## GOOD PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED

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### Good Practices

- Up-to-date and specific studies provide information that makes it possible to raise awareness among parents, teachers, community leaders, and producers about the negative consequences of child labor.
- Mass media campaigns targeting authorities and leaders raise the profile of the negative consequences of child labor; so this is a useful tool for launching a project.
- The educational needs of working children must be met through specific innovations. The three innovations produced by the project (CEC, CAIF, and EPA) take into account the special educational and working circumstances of children.
- Combining the strategies of improving the quality of education, raising awareness about the negative effects of child labor, and the conditional transfer of money appears to be an effective means of reducing dangerous child labor.
- Accelerated education is a strong alternative for overage teenagers. To be effective, this arrangement must be supported by a validation process and made official by education authorities.
- Making an educational innovation official and integrating its services into the Ministry of Education is the best way to make it sustainable.
- Assessment instruments must not be restricted to gathering data that is required to report USDOL common indicators; rather, they must also capture information about the quality of the most important processes of the project.
- If the fight against child labor in the farming industry is to be successful, the support of producers is needed. They must realize that work is not beneficial for child development or for agribusiness.
- The project's accounting staff is able to better perform their duties and guide administrative procedures when they know firsthand the working conditions of the project's specialists.

### Lessons Learned

- A well-designed project includes the meshing of its components with geographical integration. Isolating these components entails logistical and operational efforts that do not lead to good outcomes.
- In the case of seasonal family migration, it is important for the child labor eradication strategy to target the working and educational conditions of the families at their migration destination, as well as in the communities where they live during the rest of the year.
- Activities to improve the quality of education must be implemented in communities where there are direct beneficiaries. If not, it is impossible to know the impact of these activities on the improvement of the educational and working conditions of the target population.
- Family income-generating activities must mesh with educational measures to eradicate child labor.
- The monitoring system must be used for the project's management and not only to report common indicators to USDOL. Project staff must be duly trained not only to gather information, but also to interpret it and put it to use when carrying out their duties.
- Coordination among implementing agencies must be established in detail at the beginning of the project and must include clear agreements on administrative and monitoring procedures.

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## CONCLUSIONS

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The project helped to strengthen the country's ability to fight child labor through the creation of educational innovations, supporting the creation of public policies designed for this purpose, and strengthening some NGOs. CECs and EPAs made significant contributions to improving the quality of rural education in the country and averting children from work. Likewise, the educational training model created by the project may significantly contribute to improving the knowledge and skills of public school teachers.

Public awareness activities raised the profile of the problems stemming from rural and native child labor among the general public and the target population in particular. They also were the starting point for some agricultural producers to welcome the project's proposals and participate in the elimination of child labor on their farms.

The project achieved all the outcomes it had set forth, although it fell short of its eradication/prevention goals. Of the target established in the logical framework (3,095 children), the last Technical Progress Report (March 2008) reports that only 1,844 children (60%) have been prevented from working or removed from the labor force. Half of the remaining 40 percent stayed with the program but were not withdrawn from work; the other half dropped out. The educational innovations that fell short of the proposed goals were the CECs and EPAs. In large part, this is due to the project overestimated the demand that exists in the communities.

Several of the previously-discussed traits of CAIFs, CECs and EPAs explain the high desertion and non-eradication/prevention rates. Nevertheless, the underlying element was the isolation of the project's components. Instead of combining the different interventions in the same communities, the project implemented them separately; instead of selecting many children in a few communities, the project chose few children in many communities. This prevented the project from focusing its efforts and consolidating the different institutions and interventions. Additionally, there was an absence of synergy among the implementing organizations that was expressed in constant differences over administrative procedures and the monitoring system.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

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Since this is the final assessment, it is not the time for recommendations to improve the implementation of the project. Nevertheless, suggestions have been made for the implementers and USDOL to keep in mind in future activities.

Regarding the design, the following is recommended:

- Avoid the educational and training activities of projects involving indirect beneficiaries, unless parents and teachers are the direct beneficiaries.
- Adequately assess the relationship between the number of communities and the number of beneficiaries by taking into account the logistical, operational, and financial implications.
- Ensure project synergies by identifying in detail the overlap that will exist among different components and implementing organizations.
- Ensure that the beneficiaries of the projects do not include children who have participated or are participating in projects financed by the ILO-IPEC.

Regarding the implementation, the following is recommended:

- Coordinate, whenever possible, the money transfer programs with actions to improve the quality of education and eliminate child labor.
- CE and the Ministry of Education should review other countries' experiences with expanding accelerated education programs (Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, and Mexico) and learn from their lessons.
- CE should continue its dialogue with coffee producers and extends it to their unions.
- CE should systematize the three educational experiences (CEC, CAI, and EPA) for the purpose of studying in detail the methodological and operational aspects that could be improved to further reduce child labor. It should also more accurately forecast demand, the costs per center and per child beneficiary, and its targets.

Regarding monitoring, the following is recommended:

- USDOL should promote among the project's implementers a more managerial use of the monitoring system. The monitoring plan should be magnified in project planning and in the budget.

Concerning coordination and alliances, the following is recommended:

- Seek the participation of producer unions when pertinent. Working with individual producers is not enough to ensure the continuance of changes to production standards that rely on child labor.

Concerning management and administration, the following is recommended:

- Management contracts with implementing agencies should establish the venues and methods for resolving any technical, methodological, or tactical conflicts and differences that may arise.
- CAI and CE should initiate a dialog allowing them to constructively discuss the problems that emerged between the two organizations that were previously mentioned in this report. This dialogue will allow them to take advantage of the experience of the project and incorporate the lessons learned therein.

**ANNEX 2**  
**Summary Terms of Reference**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**for**

**Independent Final Evaluation of**

**DESTINO, Panama Education Initiative Project**

<b>Cooperative Agreement Number:</b>	<b>E-9-K-4-0047</b>
<b>Financing Agency:</b>	U.S. Department of Labor
<b>Type of Evaluation:</b>	Independent Final Evaluation
<b>Field Work Dates:</b>	<b>April 13-April 28, 2008</b>
<b>Preparation Date of TOR:</b>	March 2008
<b>Total Project Funds from USDOL Based on Cooperative Agreement:</b>	US \$3,000,000
<b>Vendor for Evaluation Contract:</b>	<b>Macro International Inc.</b> Headquarters, 11785 Beltsville Drive Calverton, MD 20705 Tel: (301) 572-0200 Fax: (301) 572-0999

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## Background and Justification

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The Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking (OCFT) is an office within the Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB), an agency of the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL). OCFT activities include research on international child labor, supporting U.S. government policy on international child labor, administering and overseeing grants and contracts to organizations engaged in efforts to eliminate child labor, and raise awareness about child labor issues.

Since 1995, the U.S. Congress has appropriated over \$595 million to USDOL to fund their efforts to combat exploitive child labor internationally. This funding has been used to support technical cooperation projects to combat exploitive child labor in more than 75 countries around the world. Technical cooperation projects funded by USDOL range from targeted action programs in specific sectors of work to more comprehensive programs that support national efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor as defined by ILO Convention 182. USDOL-funded projects seek to achieve the following five major goals:

1. Withdraw or prevent children from involvement in exploitive child labor through the provision of direct educational services
2. Strengthen policies on child labor and education, the capacity of national institutions to combat child labor, and formal and transitional education systems that encourage children engaged in or at-risk of engaging in exploitive labor to attend school;
3. Raise awareness of the importance of education for all children and mobilizing a wide array of actors to improve and expand education infrastructures;
4. Support research and collection of reliable data on child labor
5. Ensure the long-term sustainability of these efforts.

By increasing access to basic education, USDOL-funded projects help nurture the development, health, safety, and enhancement of future employability of children engaged in or at-risk of entering exploitive labor in geographic areas or economic sectors with a high incidence of exploitive child labor. In the appropriations to USDOL for international child labor technical cooperation, Congress directed some of the funds towards two specific programs:

### *International Labor Organization's International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor (ILO-IPEC)*

Since 1995, Congress has earmarked some \$330 million to support the International Labor Organization's International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor (ILO/IPEC), making the U.S. Government the leading donor to the program. USDOL-funded ILO/IPEC projects to combat child labor fall into one of several categories: comprehensive, national Time bound Programs (TBP) to eliminate the worst forms of child labor in a set time frame; Country Programs; sector-specific projects; data collection and research projects; and international awareness raising projects. Most projects include "direct action" components that are interventions to remove or prevent children from involvement in exploitative and hazardous work. One of the major strategies used by IPEC projects is to increase children's access to and participation in formal and non-formal education. Most IPEC projects also have a capacity-building component to assist in building a sustainable base for long-term elimination of exploitive child labor.

### *Child Labor Education Initiative*

Between 2001 and 2006, Congress directed international child labor technical cooperation funding to the Child Labor Education Initiative (EI), which focused on the elimination of the worst forms of child labor through the provision of basic education. EI projects are designed to ensure that children in areas with a high incidence of child labor are withdrawn and integrated into educational settings, and that they persist in their education once enrolled. In parallel, the program seeks to avert at-risk children from leaving school and entering child labor. The EI is based on the notion that the elimination of exploitative child labor depends, to a large extent, on improving access to, the quality

of, and the relevance of education. Otherwise, children withdrawn/prevented from child labor may not have viable alternatives and could resort to other forms of hazardous work. EI projects might focus on providing educational services to children removed from specific sectors of work and/or a specific region(s) or support a national Time-bound Program that aims to eliminate the worst forms of child labor in multiple sectors of work specific to a given country. Funds under the EI are competitively bid and support cooperative agreements with international, nonprofit, for-profit, and faith-based entities.

In addition to these two initiatives, in 2007, USDOL allocated \$60 million for child labor elimination projects not earmarked to ILO/IPEC or the EI program. As is the case with the EI, these funds were awarded through a competitive process. Finally, USDOL has supported \$2.5 million for awareness-raising and research activities not associated with the ILO/IPEC program or the EI.

### **DESTINO**

On August 16, 2004 Creative Associates International, Inc. received a 4-year Cooperative Agreement worth \$3 million from USDOL to implement an EI project in Panama aimed at withdrawing and preventing children from exploitative child labor by expanding access to and improving the quality of basic education and supporting the four goals of USDOL's Child Labor EI as outlined above. Creative Associates International, Inc. was awarded the EI project through a competitive bid process.

As stipulated in the Cooperative Agreement, Creative Associates International, Inc.'s "DESTINO" project aims to withdraw 2,420 children from work and prevent 675 children at risk of working from entering work. DESTINO works in Darién, Chiriquí, Comarca Ngabe Buglé, and the central provinces targeting children who are primarily indigenous and working in hazardous agriculture.

The project implements four educational interventions working in conjunction with its local counterparts: Centro de Capacitación y Desarrollo Integral (CCDI), Casa Esperanza, Fundación Tierra Nueva, and Fundamujer (which worked with the project in the first year).

- The first educational intervention is the tutorials (three additional tutorials were added during the project) implemented by Casa Esperanza and take place in formal schools or in Casa Esperanza centers after regular instruction.
- The second is the "Accelerated Education" program, also implemented by Casa Esperanza, which operates in seven educational centers for out-of-school child laborers.
- The third is the Colegio Agroforestal which operates in Darién and was established by the Fundación Tierra Nueva. This is a scholarship program which provides secondary school students the opportunity to attend the Colegio Agroforestal who otherwise would not continue their studies.
- The fourth intervention is the farm school implemented by Casa Esperanza, which is a full day program where children receive remediation and enhancement of academic and other developmental skills.
- CCDI implements income generation and vocational training projects with older youth and parents.
- The project led an awareness raising campaign across many communities and with teachers, community members and leaders, and with local authorities.

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### **Purpose and Scope of Evaluation**

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The **scope** of the evaluation includes a review and assessment of all activities carried out under the USDOL Cooperative Agreement with Creative Associates International, Inc. The evaluation should assess the progress of the project toward reaching its targets and objectives as outlined in the cooperative agreement and project document. The evaluation should consider all activities that have been implemented over the life of the project, addressing issues of project design, implementation, lessons learned, reliability, and recommendations for future projects.

All EI projects, which are funded through cooperative agreements, are subject to midterm and final

evaluations. The EI project in Panama went into implementation in August 2004 and is due for final evaluation in 2008. The **goals** of the evaluation process are to—

1. Help individual organizations identify areas of good performance and areas where project implementation can be improved
2. Assist OCFT to learn more about what is working in terms of the overall conceptualization and design of EI projects within the broad OCFT technical cooperation program framework
3. Assess the degree to which objectives relevant to the country-specific situation they address have been achieved
4. Assess progress in terms of children's working and educational status (i.e., withdrawal and prevention from the worst forms of child labor; enrollment, retention, completion of educational programs).

In addition to these overarching goals, the following project-specific goals have been developed by OCFT in consultation with Creative Associates International, Inc. staff:

- Converse with Ministry of Labor and CETIPPAT Officials about laws and criteria used as guidelines in the eradication of child labor and compare with those used by DESTINO
- Determine the extent to which children have significantly reduced child labor hours due to project intervention but cannot be considered officially withdrawn under U.S. Government standards
- Review Creative Associates International, Inc.'s analysis of survey data regarding pre- and post-campaign awareness of child labor among producers and the general public to get a sense of the impact of awareness raising
- Assess the impressions and effects of teacher training in Darien and among direct beneficiaries.

For the purpose of conducting this evaluation, **Macro International Inc.** will provide a highly skilled, independent evaluator to conduct this evaluation to (a) determine if projects are achieving their stated objectives and explain why or why not, (b) assess the impact of the projects in term of sustained improvements achieved, (c) recommend how to improve project performance, and (d) identify lessons learned to inform future USDOL projects. In addition, the contractor will provide recommendations to refine project-monitoring systems to ensure that project objectives and the measurement of results-based common indicators are being achieved across EI projects. The findings of the evaluations should help USDOL improve project oversight and take corrective measures where necessary.

The contractor/evaluator will work with the staff of USDOL's OCFT and relevant Creative Associates International, Inc. staff to evaluate the projects in question. The OCFT management and project staff will use the evaluation results to inform the relevance of the approach and strategy that are being followed.

Specific topics to be included in the evaluation are as follows:

**Program Design Issues**

Assess the project design's fit within existing government programs.

**Project Design/Implementation Issues**

Evaluate the project's progress towards meeting its purpose, outputs, and EI goals. Assess the adequacy and effectiveness of the project's monitoring system.

**Awareness Raising**

Assess the effectiveness of the community awareness and social mobilization campaigns.

**Partnership and Coordination Issues**

Examine partnership challenges and opportunities between the project and governmental and

nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

### **Management and Budget Issues**

Assess management processes, strengths, and weaknesses.

### **Sustainability and Impact**

Evaluate the project's plan for and steps towards assuring sustainability of its interventions. Assess impact to date on direct and indirect project beneficiaries, as well as lessons learned.

### **Other**

Examine the lessons learned of the effectiveness of various strategies used by the project to withdraw and prevent child labor.

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## **Evaluation Methodology and Timeframe**

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### **This evaluation will be carried out in the following six steps:**

1. Document analysis and preparation for the visit—includes review of project documents and preparation for the country visit.
2. Fieldwork—includes visits to Panama City and the project sites.
3. Stakeholders' meeting—after the field visits a stakeholders' meeting will be conducted to present the main findings.
4. Draft report
5. Review of the draft report by stakeholders
6. Final report

### **Data collection techniques**

Four techniques will be used to collect data for the evaluation: document analysis, interviews, focus groups, and field visits.

#### ***Document analysis***

The following documents will be analyzed:

- Project Document and Project Revisions
- Cooperative Agreement
- Solicitation of Grant Applications
- Management Procedures and Guidelines
- Progress Reports, Technical and Financial Reports
- Performance Monitoring Plan
- Work Plan
- Project files—research reports, baseline study, tools developed during the project implementation, and other background documents.

#### ***Individual and group interviews***

- Group interviews with project staff from grantee and its partners—
  - Creative Associates International, Inc.
  - Casa Esperanza
  - Centro de Capacitación y Desarrollo Integral (Comprehensive Training and Development Center)
  - Fundación Tierra Nueva
- Individual interviews with the project director, education specialist, and M&E specialist.
- Interview with representatives of national and local governments and NGOs, including IPEC/ILO representative; representatives of the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labor, National Network for Protection of Children and Adolescent Workers, National Committee for the Eradication of Child Labor and the Protection of Adolescent Workers; representatives

of the Ministry of Education in Darien and Central Provinces; representatives of farmers and community organizations.

- Interview with teachers

#### *Group interviews with project staff*

The group interviews with project staff will consist of a review of the logical framework and an auto-critical analysis of the following elements:

- Achievement of products and objectives
- Completion of targets
- Obstacles to achieving the objectives
- Factors that facilitate achieving the objectives
- Follow-up of midterm evaluation recommendations
- Coordination and alliances
- General aspects
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Analysis of assumptions and the sustainability strategy
- Understanding of USDOL common indicators

Interview with the project director, regarding the following elements:

- Achievement of products and objectives
- Completion of targets
- Obstacles to achieving the objectives
- Factors that facilitate achieving the objectives
- Coordination, alliances, and resources leveraged
- Management—relationship with partners organizations, and USDOL
- Monitoring and valuation (PMP, common indicators)

Interview with the education specialist, regarding the following elements:

- Educative interventions rationale
- Pedagogical and institutional strategies implemented
- Role played by key actors—teachers, parents, Ministry of Education officials at the local and national levels
- Sustainability of strategies implemented

Interview with the M&E specialist, regarding the following elements:

- Review of the M&E plan
- Review of the data collection instruments
- Logistics and frequency of data collection
- Review of the USDOL common indicators
- Reliability of the information

#### *Group interviews with the partner organizations staff*

Group interviews have been planned with the partner organization staff to analyze the following subjects:

- Institutional background
- Coordination with Creative Associates International, Inc.
- Review of the educative methodologies applied
- Follow-up of midterm evaluation recommendations
- Understanding of the monitoring strategy developed by the project (including USDOL indicators)
- Characteristics of the relationship with the beneficiaries
- Social changes observed
- Sustainability

*Semi-structured interview with representatives of governmental, non-governmental institutions and community-based organizations*

The interviews with the project partners will cover, during approximately 1 hour, the following elements:

- Description of the mission and institutional objectives
- Origins and history of cooperation with DESTINO project
- Objectives, targets, and results of the cooperation with DESTINO project
- Human resources, materials, and financials used in the cooperation
- Areas of difficulties
- Areas of success
- Opinion of DESTINO project and its staff
- Opinion of sustainability and actions

*Interviews with teachers*

The interviews with the teachers participating in the project will cover the following subjects:

- Educational innovations the project has developed to augment the children's entry, persistence and completion of school, and their withdrawal and prevention from exploitive child labor
- Educational innovations the project has developed to improve the quality of education or to withdraw and prevent children from exploitive child labor
- Awareness-raising strategies the project has developed
- Activities for increasing teaching capacity
- Contribution of educational and didactic material
- Relationship with the project promoters
- Their opinion of the impact of the project on the education and working status of children
- Their opinion of the impact of the project on the attitude of the parents toward the education and working status of their children
- Their opinion of the project
- Sustainability of project interventions

*Field visits*

The evaluator will visit the sites where the project is carried out: Darien, Central Provinces, Chiriquí and Comarca. A total of eight days will be devoted to visit these locations. During the visits the evaluator will observe the activities and outputs which the project has developed. Likewise, focus groups with children and parents will be held. Additionally, interviews will be conducted with officers from local governments, NGOs, community leaders and teachers.

*Focus groups*

Four focus groups will be conducted with children and parents in Boca Jevay and La Palma. The participants of the focus groups will be chosen randomly from the beneficiaries available at the time of the interview.

*Focus groups with children*

The objective of the focus group with the children is to identify their educational and productive activities and their perception of these activities. The groups will comprise no less than 8 children and no more than 12. The exercise will be done without the presence of the director, teacher, or other member of the project.

The focus groups will be done in three steps: (1) introduction of the children, (2) graphical representation of "A Day in My Life" by the children and (3) analysis of information.

*Focus Group with parents*

The objective of the focus group with the parents is to identify their knowledge of the activities of the project and their perception of their children's education and child labor. The groups comprise no less

than 6 parents and no more than 12. The exercise will be done without the presence of the director, teacher, or other member of the project.

The focus groups will be done in three steps: (1) introduction of the parents, (2) opinion of the project activities and (3) opinion of education and child labor

### **Confidentiality**

The evaluation mission will observe utmost confidentiality about information and feedback elicited during the individual and group interviews. To ensure a maximum freedom of expression from the implementing partners, stakeholders, communities, and beneficiaries, implementing partner staff will not be present during interviews. However, implementing partner staff may accompany the evaluator to make introductions whenever necessary, to facilitate the evaluation process, to make respondents feel comfortable, and to allow the evaluator to observe the interaction between the implementing partner staff and the interviewees.

### **Feedback**

After the field visits, the evaluator will conduct a stakeholders’ meeting with the national implementing partners and other stakeholders. Details about the participants will be determined after consultations with the staff of DESTINO during the first day of field work in Panama.

The meeting will be used to present the major finding and emerging issues, solicit recommendations, and obtain additional information from stakeholders, including those that were not interviewed individually. The evaluator will prepare the meeting by listing the main findings and conclusions of the field work so far, as well as issues that require clarification or additional information.

Another meeting will then be conducted. It will include only the Creative Associates International, Inc. staff to discuss findings regarding internal topics, such as management and M&E.

Afterwards, feedback from the project and USDOL staff will be collected and incorporated as written comments into the draft report.

### **Timetable**

<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Dates</b>
Desk Review of Project Materials and Interviews with OCFT staff	March
International Travel	April 12
Field Work	April 14-26
Stakeholder Meeting	April 28
International Travel	April 29
Draft Report	Due to Macro May 13 Due to USDOL May 16
Submitted to Stakeholders	Due May 20
Comments Due from USDOL and Stakeholders	Due May 27
Finalization of Document	Due June 2

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### **Expected Outputs/Deliverables**

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The evaluator will submit to ILAB/OCFT **an evaluation report** that incorporates the results of the tasks outlined in Section III in the format prescribed by ILAB/OCFT, which includes at minimum the following sections:

- a. Table of Contents
- b. Executive Summary—providing an overview of the evaluation and summary of the

- main findings and recommendations
- c. List of Acronyms
- d. Evaluation Objectives
- e. Methodology of Evaluation
- f. Findings
- g. Lessons Learned and Good Practices
- h. Conclusions
- i. Recommendations
- j. Annexes—including a list of interviews/meetings, site visits, documents reviewed, stakeholder workshop agenda and participants, TOR, cross-reference list of the TOR questions and pages addressed in the report.

The report should be a maximum of 40 pages, excluding the annexes. The organizational format for the sections on presentation of findings, lessons learned, conclusions, and recommendations is at the discretion of the evaluator.

The evaluator will circulate the first draft of the report to key stakeholders for their review. Comments from stakeholders will be consolidated and incorporated into the final report as appropriate; then the evaluator will provide a response to each stakeholder's query about why some comments might not have been incorporated.

While the substantive content of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the report shall be determined by the evaluator, the report is subject to final approval by ILAB/OCFT, which determines whether the report meets the conditions of the TOR. **A first draft is due to Macro no later than May 13, 2008, 10 working days after returning from an evaluation mission. A final draft is due on June 2, 2008, following the receipt of comments from stakeholders. All drafts will be written in Spanish, with the final report to be translated into English.**

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## Inputs

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Macro International Inc. (Macro) will provide all logistical and administrative support for their staff and sub-contractors, including travel arrangements (e.g., airline and hotel reservations, purchasing airline tickets, providing per diem) and all materials (e.g., telecommunications, office supplies) needed to provide all deliverables. Macro will also be responsible for providing the management and oversight necessary to ensure consistency of methods and technical standards.

DESTINO will coordinate and organize the logistics of the meetings and field visits in Panama and selected districts, transportation to field sites, and the logistics of the stakeholder workshop. Specifically, DESTINO will arrange and pay all costs related to stakeholder meeting, including the meeting room, coffee break and lunch, as well as any audio/visual equipment needed for the meeting. DESTINO will also arrange and pay for hotel stay, per diem, and any transportation costs for stakeholders to attend the meeting.

Macro or its subcontractors should contact Sylvia Ellison, Management Associate, Creative Associates International, Inc.—Tel: (202) 966-5804, E-mail: SylviaE@caii-dc.com—to initiate contact with field staff. Your primary point of contact for the project in Panama is Melinda Anguizola, DESTINO Project Director—Tel: (507) 317-1912/3, Mobile: (507) 317 1914, E-mail: MelindaA@pa.caii.com.