

P5-Million to fund drive vs. child labor in Tobacco industry

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CITY, La Union- A Geneva, Switzerland-based foundation in coordination with the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) Regional Office I has launched a project designed to eliminate child labor in the tobacco-growing provinces in the Ilocos.

A two-year comprehensive project called Eliminating Child Labor in the Tobacco Industry (ECLTI) aims to eliminate or lessen the risks of child labor in the tobacco industry through the establishment of reliable baseline data, convergence of programs from various social partners and promotion of advocacy and capability building.

The Eliminating Child Labor in Tobacco-

growing Foundation (ECLT Foundation) in Geneva has donate in the form of a grant P5,040,000.00 for the two-year project. The money will be spent, among others, for trainings, organization/strengthening of Barangay Councils for the Protection of Children (BCPCs) including alternative livelihood and educational assistance.

A sub-committee for the Elimination of Child Labor in the Tobacco Industry (SECLTI), involved in the implementation and monitoring the child labor project, was created. DOLE serves as the committee chair and the members are: National Tobacco Industry (NTA), Department of Social Welfare

and Development (DSWD), Department of Education, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Health (DOH), Local Government Units, Union Leaf, Trans-Manila, Conleaf, Phils., Philip Morris and National Tobacco Redrying Company Incorporated.

Don Mariano Marcos State University North La Union Campus (DMMMSU-NLUC) in cooperation with Philippine Association of State Universities and Colleges conducted and presented the Research Survey on the Incidence of Child Labor in the Tobacco Industry to the

SECLTI core members.

DOLE Regional Director Atty. Guerrero N. Cirilo said in an interview that the intended project beneficiaries for the livelihood and educational assistance are already identified. He added that ECLTI project started in July last year and is now on its second phase of implementation and monitoring.

Orientation regarding the National Program against Child Labor, Child Labor Laws, Values and Responsible Parenthood, Domestic Violence, Gender Development, and Organization/ Strengthening of BCPCs are key activities to consider starting August 2004 until July the following year. by Loida Tibayan