



PROJECT FOR RE-LAUNCHING WORKING CHILDREN'S (NATs EJT) PRODUCTS

Within the framework of solidarity-base economy, the work performed by children plays a very important political role, bringing up a firm call for protagonism and recognition of the value of work itself. In order to support the solidarity-based economy and the efforts done by the WC within their income-generating activities, we think it is necessary to come up with a new proposal to launch a trading in WC products.

Foreword

It would take too long to took back and count all the activities and projects that have developed in the last few years and that have their main focus on working children. It would be like watching an endless movie. The project of economic solidarity with the WC Movements started in the years 1997-98 thanks to the action taken by the Equo Mercato cooperative. The project, which aimed at importing and selling of the products made by WC, was conceived during a meeting of the Manthoc delegates in Peru; 2 representatives of the Equo Mercato cooperative were also there. During this meeting the WC delegates asked E.Q. to become PORTAVOCE of their movement in Italy; E.Q. was proud to fulfil this request and started to import some of the products made by the WC, trying to market the products within the fair trade channels. Nonetheless the Italian fair trade shops did not support the project, on the contrary, they let it die.

The experiences of WC in the world and the existence of the WC Movements were not known in Italy, and for this reason an Association was set up 2 years later, it was called "Italianats"; its objective was to raise awareness through the voice and experiences of WC movements; its activities are organization and participation to meetings (like in Berlin and Siena), so to increase the strength of the Movements. After quite a few years we can perceive a change in the way people think about working children; this can be seen both in the support that the Movements have and in the value that is attached to the dignified work carried out by WC. This is one of the results of the awareness raising process promoted by Italianats; and also thanks to Equo Mercato selling activities. What has been said until now allows us to better understand how important and how relevant this project has been, we therefore believe that it is necessary to go on with it and possibly, to make it stronger.

The support to organizations promoting a vision of child work different from the abolitionist one belonging to the ILO (see last conference on May 9th-10th) is essential; our proposal is part of this support: setting up a trade means also promoting these self-organised processes, which call for the right for children to work in dignified conditions- against a ambiguous approach, the one used by International organisations, which do not understand the experiences of WC all over the world and are not aware of the processes carried out by the movements. On the other hand, we must also take into account that there has been a very significant turn in UNICEF attitude, as it has mentioned the WC Movements in its webpage, adding that they ought to be listened to.

Signs of solidarity with WC in the world:

- 1) Importing and selling the WC products has given us the opportunity to establish a contact with them on a regular basis, this has allowed us to have a closer view of their reality and a better understanding of their processes. Moreover, thanks to this activity we were able to answer the following questions: What kind of work can be done in dignified conditions? What are the products of the work carried out in dignified conditions?
- 2) The proposal of a solidarity-based economy has opened new working opportunities and new relationships supporting the WC Movements.
- 3) We have been able to arouse UNICEF's and other organisations' interest for the WC experiences, and their processes, as they have been reported by ITALIANATS, as a matter of fact some organisations have asked to join ITALIANATS

Current situation

Working children's products need a dedicated space that can make them more visible and they need an adequate promotion. In the present time, marked by the economic crisis (the crisis of the free market approach), this proposal certainly has strategic importance as it allows to improve and strengthen the relationships with the movements and provides for the creation of new opportunities, thus making it possible for the poorest and most vulnerable people, like WC, to carry on their work in dignified conditions.

Another step within this project is the trade mark (guarantee certificate for these products) which has been asked by the WC during the International Meeting (Siena-Italy 2006). This trademark is essential since it qualifies the products and it guarantees that those were made by children working in dignified and protected conditions, in respect of their rights. This proposal is a revolution. We think it is the only trademark proposed by the producer of the South.

General objective:

- **Developing and promoting a fair and equitable trade of products made by children working in dignified and protected conditions, where their rights are respected, in the framework of a solidarity-based economy.**
- **Creating an adequate structure for the promotion and selling of products made by the WC.**

The project focuses on the strengthening of WC movements (niños, niñas y adolescentes Trabajadores (Nats), EJT Enfants, Jeunne travailleurs , CW children Work) without excluding the possibility of involving other organizations working with childhood, since one of the objectives of this project is to contribute to the promotion of the rights of WC through a constant and committed support of their fight against exploitation, in its various forms, and vulnerability; thus contributing to the improvement of their living conditions.

Specific objectives:

- Establish and alliance with the WC movements and the social movements of the South of the world (Latin America, Asia, Africa) in order to improve their income-generating productive activities.
- Promote solidarity-based economy as the main and common focus of the North-South Alliance.
- Together with ItalianAT's and EuropaNAT's, strengthen the promotion and dissemination strategies of the Movements active in Asia, Africa and Latin America.
- Set up a physical structure where the products imported by the Association can be sold.
- Support the creation and the further development of educational activities with the WC children organizations.

Actions and activities

- Make a cooperation and participation agreement with the WC for the promotion and the trading of the products (Analysis and proposals about the projects will be carried out together with the producers);
- Carry out a study on the trademark for the WC products
- Establish alliances with the organisations working with the movements; among them ItaliaNATs and Europanats network
- Develop a communication and marketing strategy;
- Develop new channels for selling the products: national and international fairs, dedicated events, and selling through mail and internet.
- Opening new selling points (beyond fair trade shops)
- Create the adequate structure for an Association, together with Italianats, in order to import the products.

- Create a working group that is committed and works towards the goals of this projects
- Supporting innovation and qualification of the products made by WC (it is necessary that the products are accompanied by a written explanation taking into account different features: who has made the product, where it has been made, under which conditions etc. It must also clarify that the products are symbols of the fight against exploitation of WC and that they are part of a solidarity-based project aiming at the protection of children rights.
- Creation of a Website that allows the promotion and the advertisement of the products to be sold

Expected results

- Within the first year, we will define the cooperation with 2 base organisations in each continent.
- Within the first year we have established with Italianats an agreement on the trading of the products.
- Within the second year, 3 national movements have started to produce certificates stating that only dignified work contributed to the production of the sold objects.
- Participate in 2 national fairs and at least one international fairs, plus a variety of local events.
- We have set up a selling system through mail and internet

Necessary resources:

Fabio Cattaneo is willing to work on a voluntary basis as promotor of the project from 8 to 12 months more or less; after this period the process will be evaluated and paid work will be introduced.

A few months after the first activities have been started a person will be needed in order to take up the administrative role together with Fabio; the main duties will be having contacts with the movements and the organizations in Europe. Moreover in the first year of activity it is important to open the web page of the association, that will include the catalogue of the products making the selling through mail possible; this also implies the search for professional partners that can share this project.

It is important to note that it is required the cooperation of professionals, friends and members of the movements that thanks to their knowledge and their availability will support the project.

Costs

During the first year we have planned an investment plan, ranging from 25.000 to 30.000 euros, where at least € 25.000 will be invested in buying the products.

Initial activities:

- Setting up the association
- Finding a warehouse of min. 100 square meters in Cantù or nearby.
- Organizing the office
- Making the first order of products from **Colombia** by the end of 2010 (Pequeño Trabajador, Creciendo Unidos, Escuela Viajera, Cooperativa Crecer). At the beginning of 2011 from **Perú** (Manthoc), **Benin y Burkina Faso** A.E.J.T. At the half of 2011 orders of products from the WC of Bangalore, India.
- 4 or 5 months after the order the products will arrive to Italy, where we will start participating to the international fairs. The webpage will also be created.
- Defining wholesale and retail prices.
- Fabio will work as a part-time volunteer. What about the person in charge of the administration?
- New catalogues will be prepared, displaying the WC products. Evaluate the qualification of the products.
- Creating the web page of the new structure.

NATS: projects and products

List of some of the WC products

COLOMBIA:

Pequeño Trabajador: wooden picture frames, painted cards, eco-paper, jewels, small notebooks made with different techniques, t-shirt and other printed goods.

Creciendo Unidos: furniture, didactic toys, cards, wooden crosses etc.

Cooperativa Crecer: carbon-made products, necklaces, jewels, boxes

Escuela Viajera: jewels made of natural elements like seeds, fibers dried fruits etc.

PERU

Manthoc: cards, wooden toys, t-shirts

Programa de Educación "Alejandro Cussianovich" : notebooks, diaries, cards

BENIN

Aejtb: esmall statues made of wood, necklaces, toys from tin cans or other rrecycled material, drums, and other musical instruments.

BURKINA FASO

Aejt: necklaces, trys made of recycled materials (cars or motorcars made of recycled tin) statues, key cases, cotton bags.

INDIA

CWC Bangalore – key-cases made of bambu, trays made of grass.