**Country of Project:** Namibia

**Background**: According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), in 2008 there were an estimated 172 million children ages 5-14 participating in child labor world wide. When children partake in child labor they are denied their baisc rights to survival, devleopment, and protection.

Children and adolescents in Namibia are confronted with serious challenges that continue to impede their human rights. These include the child's rights to freedom from economic exploitation, and from performing work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with education. Due to the adverse effects of poverty and the HIV/AIDS pandemic, Namibia has experienced a rise in incidences of child labor including the *Worst Forms of Child Labor (WFCL)*. The International Labor Organiztion considers the WFCL as being prioity to eliminate. These practices include but are not limited to: slavery, debt bondage, child selling or trafficking, forced drug trafficking, the forced recruitment of child soldiers and early marriage.

**Project Description:**
This summer I will be traveling to Windhoek, Namibia to work with the nonprofit organization the *Legal Assistance Centre* (LAC). I will be working with the Aids Law Unit (a branch of the LAC) to evaluate and improve an existing Child Labor Program as well as increase efficiency through the introduction of a new communication system. The existing program is designed to: identify, monitor, and prevent child labor, as well as withdraw children whose rights have already been violated.

 The program has three main components**:**
**1) Monitors:** staff in the field tasked with monitoring vulnerable children
**2) Responders:** social workers, doctors and child welfare personnel that respond to instances of child labor
**3) LAC headquarters:** responsible for collecting data, linking monitors to responders and coordinating operations.

The monitors for this program are located in extremely rural areas of Namibia and as a result, the project has experienced a multitude of communication issues. Without effective communication abilities, reporting is slow and response rates are delayed resulting in continued instances of child labor after initial identification.

The main focus of my project will be to help implement a pilot project designed in collaboration by Root Change (a U.S. based nonprofit), the LAC, and myself, to streamline communication between monitors, responders, and the LAC in order to increase impact. The primary technology I will utilize will be a free software called Frontline SMS. Frontline SMS is "an award winning, free, open source software that turns a laptop and a mobile phone into a central communications hub (Frontline SMS)." Through the use of a Frontline SMS system, communication between appropriate people

(staff in the field, LAC, and responders) will be more efficient and will directly impact our ability to decrease the prevalence of child labor.


Main Tasks:
- Help to evaluate existing child labor program
- Conduct focus groups to identify key challenges and areas of concern regarding communication between all stakeholders
- Design and implement an SMS communication system using the open source software, Frontline SMS
- Train LAC staff to use Frontline SMS software in order to ensure the program continues to prosper after my departure.