



ASIA/BANGLADESH - Extreme poverty forces children to leave school in order to find a job

Dhaka (Agenzia Fides) - Education penalized by poverty. This is the situation for almost 50% of elementary school students in Bangladesh who are forced by the overwhelming poverty to leave school before completing fifth grade and get a job. Only a small proportion of the labor force, 0.4%, receives a professional, technical preparation, and is paid with very low wages. The situation is particularly serious for street children in the country who come from urban slums and work illegally, 10 to 12 hours a day, for 20/30 taka (about 0:32 dollars). A report of the Bengali statistics office revealed that 5.8 million children between the ages of 10 and 14 work in the "informal" sector, that is not regulated by rules or contracts, which includes 11.3% of the total workforce. These little ones are not in condition to attend school or receive professional formation. With the help of local programs, designed to take advantage of the skills and potential of poor youngsters, at least 45 000 students between 15 and 18 years of age are about to graduate and will be employed in decent jobs, with an initial salary of 5,000 taka (62 dollars) a month. More than 140 000 young graduates through one of these programs have already found a permanent job. (AP) (Agenzia Fides 11/01/2013)