Children
at Risk

**Practical approaches
to addressing child
protection issues in
Cambodia, Indonesia,
the Philippines,
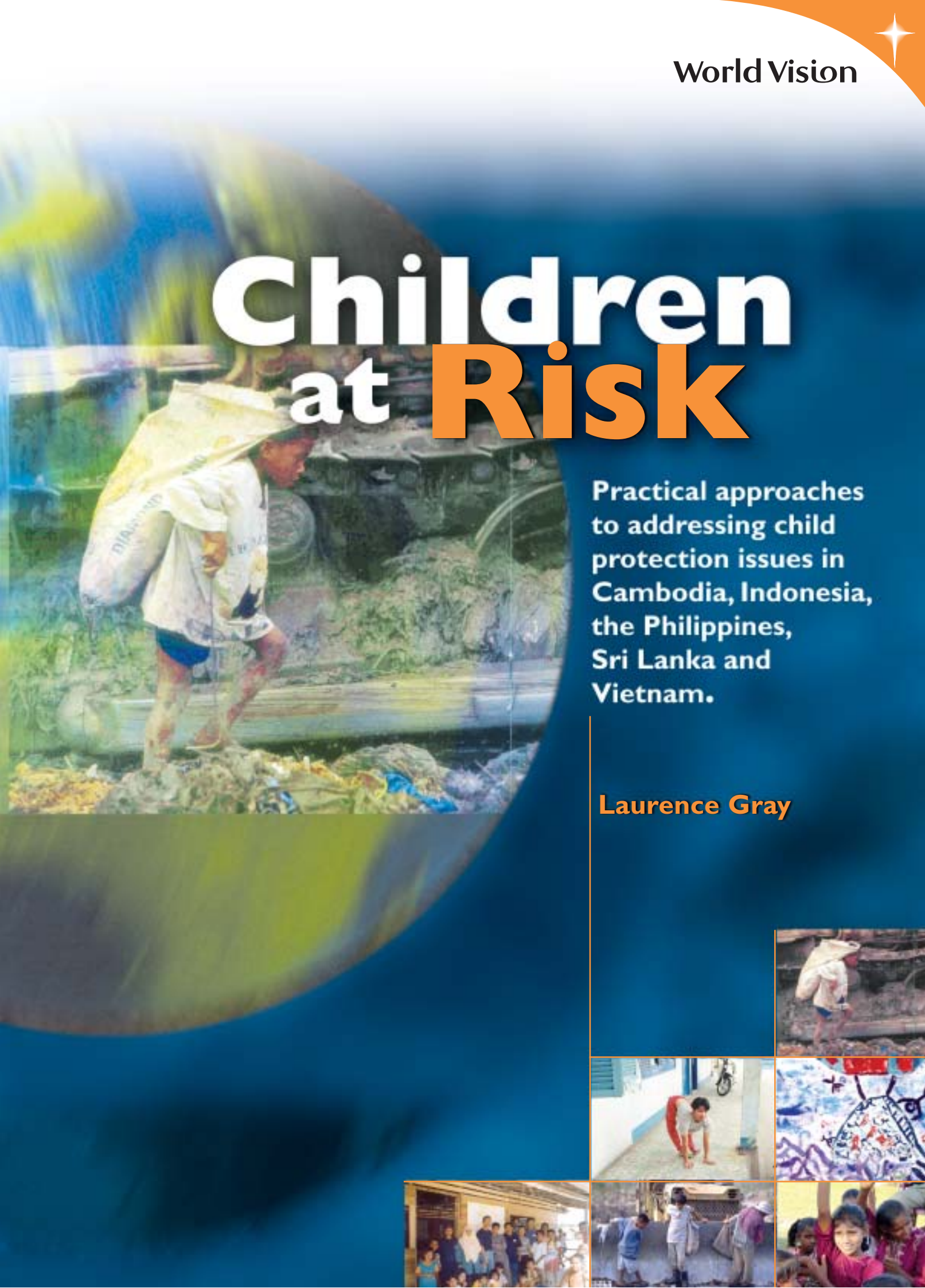Sri Lanka and
Vietnam.**

Laurence Gray

children at risk

Practical approaches to addressing child protection issues in Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Vietnam

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*"We are not the sources
of the problems,
We are the resources
needed to solve them.
We are not expenses, we
are investments…
You call us the future, but
we are also the present."* [1]

Children see inequity and experience need; they have stated so – at the global level, most recently through their representatives at the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children. The words quoted above were part of their plea for "a world fit for children", in that forum.

Commitment to children exists in policy with the almost universal ratification of the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC). Twelve years ago, at the World Summit for Children, governments promised to "provide improved protection to children in difficult circumstances and tackle the root causes leading to such circumstances". [2] While gains have been made in the area of policy and increased government commitment to international standards, the experience of many children is much different.

In 1998, the United Nations Committee monitoring the implementation of the CRC ranked issues of priority in East Asia and the Pacific by the frequency that they appeared in country reports:

- children's treatment by the juvenile justice system
- child abuse, neglect and exploitation, including corporal punishment in schools
- child labourers and child migrants
- discrimination against girl children, orphans and those who are displaced
- children in welfare institutions. [3]

Today other issues have joined these. The impact of HIV/AIDS on children is significant in terms of both infection levels among high-risk groups, and increasing numbers of orphans as parents succumb to the disease. The manufacture, trafficking and use of drugs are also growing problems particularly in urban or border areas. Human trafficking has also increased as a cross-border issue since 1998. Local response is increasingly linked to issues that are trans-boundary.

The hopes of children expressed through this study are for basic rights. They include greater access to education and health care; safety both within the family and outside it; justice; the opportunity to develop, to be heard, to play; and freedom from fear, violence, armed conflict and oppression.

Actors that promote the best interests of children must recognise the changes needed to address emerging issues. Government will always be a necessary player to influence in broadening and strengthening civil society. Yet approaches need to go beyond government: the private sector has a stake in development and can be child-blind or child-friendly; the available avenues of influence on corporate responsibility need to be pursued. Further change is needed in communities, homes and hearts.

On the other hand, private sector activity should not be seen as negating the primary

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[1] *A World Fit for Us*, Children's Forum statement at the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children, 2002

[2] *World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children*, UNICEF, 1990

[3] *Children in Need of Special Protection in East Asia and the Pacific: A UNICEF perspective*, UNICEF, 2000

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responsibility of states to protect children. Collaboration across all sectors is vital to promote change and ensure the realisation of children's rights.

Lessons learned from civil society practice in promoting child protection need to be shared. There is no magic formula – no single intervention that works in all environments – but standing out as giving value and hope to children are programs whose designs effectively apply common principles of the CRC; the commitment of individuals and agencies to work in difficult, uncertain areas; approaches gaining the support of others to understand and act on problems limiting the lives of children; and practice that results in changed attitude, behaviour, and resources. Impact can be measured in many ways, but increasing hope of children and communities is a particularly valuable indicator, as it is an investment in both today and tomorrow.

Experiences detailed in this report show where NGOs including World Vision have been able to extend the practical role of governance in key areas of protection, prevention and development. They engage on areas of priority reflected in the aspirations of children and noted as concerns by country mechanisms monitoring the implementation of the CRC. Program models that promote children's participation in development also serve to strengthen protection of children.

Direct service makes a difference to beneficiaries, but its impact can be furthered when linked to advocacy on policy. Research demonstrating the links between the "micro" and "macro" aspects of child protection can promote change at both levels. Greater attention is needed to getting the message, whether of good practice or emerging problems, into the public arena. One aspect of globalisation is the increased availability, speed and influence of information. Initiatives that work well to address child protection in the field can, if communicated in a timely and accessible way, influence program designs in other countries and regions.

Over the past 20 years, NGOs have documented and published on child abuse and neglect, pushed for legal change and aroused public opinion. Never before have states agreed to accept so many restrictions on their domestic behaviour or to submit to so much international scrutiny. [4] Change is often difficult, but it is possible.

Indeed, as this report demonstrates, the practical interventions needed to protect children and reduce the threats to their safety and well-being are clearly do-able. So what is holding us back?

At grassroots level, the ideas and energy to bring about change often already exist – they need to be resourced and mobilised. It is crucial that at higher levels, decisions (including that of inaction) do not have the effect of holding back important changes at the grassroots.

This report's focus is from a civil society perspective, but clearly draws attention to the need for ongoing government and donor commitment. Local and national government agencies and officials clearly have a primary role in protecting children, and NGO activity should never be seen as a replacement for government obligations.

At the same time, "from whom much is given, much shall be required". Of most concern has been the lack of initiatives by all donors/lenders to assist governments with budget support and capacity-building help for children at risk. The failure of major development institutions to recognise and address the problem of children at risk reflects the very marginalisation of this problem. International institutions such as the World Bank, which seek to pressure states to strengthen governance and improve the rule of law, have been insufficiently concerned to ensure that children benefit from their efforts.

This report shows examples of what can be

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[4]   See, for example, "The world is watching: A survey of human rights law", *The Economist*, 5 December 1998

achieved when linkages between civil society, government and donors are effectively made.

Underpinning the entire report is a call for stronger commitment, and urgent action – a demonstration that child abuse is simply no longer tolerated.

Children at Risk is a follow-up to World Vision's earlier study *Crying Out: Children and communities speak on abuse and neglect*, [5] which revealed that children were being abused or neglected to an alarming extent and made recommendations to address this. The present report reflects a survey of World Vision and some other NGOs' approaches to protecting children at risk in five Asian countries. It identifies a range of practical programming and policy measures that are – or hold promise for – effectively addressing the abuse and neglect of children.

Cambodia

In Cambodia, the study covered: community action to reduce hazardous child labour in urban and rural locations; and "micro", "meso" and "macro" responses needed to promote child protection and move from awareness to action. The three sections of this chapter discuss approaches to giving children a voice in their own development at village and national level; reducing poverty-related child protection risks through income-generation approaches with children, families and community; and influencing government policy and policing practice, to improve law enforcement as one step needed to protect children from sexual exploitation.

Findings were:

• Increased child participation supported by community leaders promotes improvement in child protection.

• Approaches that mobilise community members on child protection are most effective when using materials that are highly visual with easy to understand text and that work contextually, give meaning, and are linked to follow-up.

• Actions that increase livelihood options of children and families reduce the debilitating effects of poverty.

• Inter-agency partnerships and use of a country's commitment to the CRC can be most effective in promoting child protection.

Indonesia

In Indonesia, key issues of child protection require improving access to education and engagement in peace building. Access to quality education, as a key component of child protection in practice and also a useful entry point to the community, is seen as a priority.

The study found in particular that:

• Creative educational approaches contribute to promoting child protection in a range of contexts.

• Linking the CRC to curriculum has had direct benefits for children as well as strengthening a key mechanism for child development.

Children affected by armed conflict in Indonesia experience isolation, high mobility, poor access to education and health care, and are at high risk of exploitation. This study found that:

• Cooperative approaches between agencies can bring out the strengths of each agency's approach and extend these strengths into other areas.

• Community development has the capacity to support peace building and develop trust.

• A significant focus on the process, not only the outcome, is needed to ensure that an initiative does not become a liability leading to further tension.

• Faith-based groups can assist in the process as local partners in promoting peace and reducing risks to children.

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[5] Dorning, K, *Crying Out: Children and communities speak on abuse and neglect*, World Vision International, 2002 (http://www.wvi.org/imagine/can.htm)

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The Philippines

In the Philippines, a significant advantage is that national child protection legislation exists. Greater opportunity exists for concerned groups to access information from and to lobby government. Implementing national policy at the local government level, however, requires the involvement of NGOs and civil society to identify practical child protection measures, maximise opportunities and counter constraints.

Findings included:

- Partnership, community organising and a broad range of involvements assist in gaining local ownership, securing a legal base for a local government code and creating expectation/commitment for implementation.

    "Start with the window of the community, and then you need to make a door"

    – comment from NGO discussion in the Philippines

- Civil society gains strength through functioning networks, which allow for local issues of child protection to be addressed in ways that would not be possible for a single agency to achieve.
- Where children and communities have a vibrant faith-based commitment, this is a source of hope and energy for change.
- The development of local legislation supported by local taxes promotes local accountability for child protection.
- Documentation of the process of development of a children's code has allowed for this approach to be adapted to other provinces and similar codes formed.

Sri Lanka

In Sri Lanka, decades of conflict have affected children, compromised their development and in some cases, seen children themselves actively participate in the fighting. Sri Lankan children have experienced reduced access to education and development, and have identified domestic violence and loss of livelihood as other threats to their development and protection.

The findings of this chapter include:

- The Sri Lankan Children's Challenge, an event linked to the 2002 United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children, gave more than 11,000 children the opportunity to identify barriers they face and to recommend solutions to their Government. This successful campaign is one example of advocacy supported by inter-agency cooperation.
- Children have capacity and potential to advocate locally, even when others fear to raise their voice; this is illustrated by the success of a children-led movement to oppose illegal alcohol brewing which contributes to high rates of domestic violence.
- Community structures and approaches can be developed that promote child protection on a local and national level.
- Relief efforts, in areas of the country that are now becoming more accessible, need to include child protection as a key area of response along with issues of health and education.

Vietnam

In Vietnam, the main focus of the study is children with disabilities. Awareness of disability and of child abuse or neglect is often extremely limited, and those in need of extra care are too often invisible to others. The study examines community-based approaches that engage with local communities and structures in integrated care and rehabilitation for these children, seeking to broaden the definition of "community" to include vulnerable members who often are hidden away.

The study found that:

- Local authorities have increasingly supported these efforts as models and approaches have emerged.
- Community-based rehabilitation can be integrated with mainstream community development to the benefit of children who are at a high risk of neglect.
- Government, family and civil society play a role in implementing commitments made by the state through international conventions.
- Further understanding of disability and impact from interventions can be gained through joint research in partnership with universities.

Key messages

Central messages of this study are that all those seeking to protect children and ensure their participation – including governments, donors, International Organisations, NGOs and other civil society groups – should, wherever possible,

- Partner with children to support them in understanding and influencing their peers.
- Recognise, nurture and build on the resilience that children often display in extreme situations, which can be an asset to other children, families and community.
- Recognise and support the family as the principal agent for the fulfilment of children's development and potential.
- Engage families and the community to broaden their understanding on issues affecting children through integrating activities with a clear social justice element.
- Use existing structures to promote social and political change. How to increase local political will to apply laws and resource the social sector? Mobilise communities.
- Increase the resources that will strengthen institutions of education and health that build children's capacity to protect

themselves and those around them, and to recover from trauma or injuries they have experienced as a result of abuse or exploitation.

- Provide adequate resources to strengthen the mechanisms of protection for children through increased law enforcement.
- Recognise the importance of the psychological and spiritual well-being of children, and cooperate with local initiatives that are addressing these in appropriate ways, including those that are faith-based.
- Research emerging issues; document, monitor and share information showing impact over time; use child-sensitive indicators to monitor impact.
- Invest in capacity building of staff, counterparts, community members and children.
- Invest in advocacy, collaboration and strategic partnerships to promote sustainable development and responsive government, and avoid duplication.
- Review existing processes and policies that may be restricting potential for change.

The world's governments have promised to provide improved protection to children in difficult circumstances and tackle the root causes leading to such circumstances.

"Children's lives cannot be put on hold while adult society mulls over its obligation to them." [6]

Failure to act – to back up the good intention with practical measures that bring about a safer world for children – really does not honour the world's promise to the child, nor the promise and potential *of* the child. In ten years, will the Secretary General of the United Nations again need to say to children of the world, "We have failed you"?

Each of us can play a role in moving from failure to hope.

[6] Amnesty International, Statement to the World Congress on Human Rights, 1993

introduction

"How is it possible for normal, decent, God-fearing people...to have turned a blind eye to a system which impoverished, oppressed and violated so many?"

– Desmond Tutu, on apartheid

"Children here don't like to have dreams for the future because they can't fulfil them…"

– 15-year old girl from a family displaced by conflict, West Kalimantan, Indonesia

Globally, many children are in trouble.

- Malnutrition among pregnant women is a major factor in the stunting of an estimated 177 million children's growth.
- More than 20% of primary school-aged children in developing countries are not in school.
- Approximately 50% of the 40 million people displaced by conflict are children.
- More than 10 million children under 15 have lost their mother or both parents to AIDS, and 1.5 million under-15 year olds are infected with HIV.
- 11 million children under five die each year from preventable illnesses.
- 50 million children are malnourished.
- 150 million children live on the streets.
- Domestic violence, though relatively hidden and ignored, is the most prevalent form of violence against women and girls – affecting millions each year.

– The State of the World's Children 2001, UNICEF

In the Asia-Pacific region, issues identified by UNICEF in 2000 as priorities for child protection[1] include:

- harmful and disabling child labour
- commercial sexual exploitation of children
- trafficking of children
- physical and sexual abuse
- discriminatory practices, deficient laws and inappropriate judicial process
- orphans, unaccompanied children and children infected or affected by HIV/AIDS
- children affected by armed conflict
- children with disabilities
- the disproportionate number of girls and ethnic minorities among those neglected and abused.

Perception of and response to human rights, and the right of children to protection, has changed dramatically over the last few decades. In specific parts of the world, there were dramatic leaps forward, such as the end of apartheid rule in South Africa in 1994. The 50th anniversary of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* was celebrated in 1998. The 10th anniversary of the UN *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC), and the related *World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children*, were marked in September 2000.

[1] *Children in Need of Special Protection in East Asia and the Pacific*, UNICEF, 2000

Civil society and government: the importance of linkage

"Dynamic involvement of NGOs to promote change and influence government has contributed significantly to the promulgation of safety nets and the protection of rights of all children, including the poorest." [2]

International instruments have given opportunity for civil society to link local or "micro" issues of exploitation with the "macro" government commitment. They are mechanisms that add to a government's claim to be counted among developed nations.

World Vision is committed to promoting change in the best interests of children (CRC Article 3), and the broadening of the agency's approach over the past 50 years has been moving in this direction. World Vision has moved on from a focus on institutional childcare (in orphanages, for example) in the early days, to community development in the 1960s and 70s, to building area-wide development links between communities and placing greater value on influencing policy, systems and structures in the 1990s. In the new millennium, advocacy and "transformational development" [3] continue to be pursued in the interests of children and communities.

While increased opportunity for the concerns of the poor to gain a place at the table of governance has resulted in improved legislative frameworks, policy and sometimes provision, children and communities continue to face significant risk and to lack hope. Desmond Tutu's questioning of the widespread acceptance of injustice can be raised in many other contexts, notably the ongoing exploitation and neglect of children.

We ask: how is it possible that children are treated so poorly by so many?

Ongoing engagement from the NGO sector, among others, is needed to raise this problem in the public and political arena. NGOs are uniquely positioned between governments, markets and civil society, and as part of the latter are able to significantly influence public debate. [4] To the extent that they are actively engaged with the poor, they can ensure that the perspectives of the poor are contributed to policy discussions.

The bulk of World Vision's operations are community development projects incorporating a range of interventions. This close involvement gives the agency both an opportunity and an obligation to contribute to debate on current social issues affecting children, which need attention at community, government and international levels.

What kinds of projects and policies make the world a safer place for children?

Many actions can make a difference for children if they are designed with this as a consideration. Inclusion of priorities for children is needed in large-scale structural adjustment programs authored by international financial institutions in the same way it is with local community development efforts. For example, just as the Asian Development Bank has built child protection concerns into its *Social Protection Strategy* and its plan for Cambodia's tourism sector, [5] the world's biggest net spender on children's projects – the World Bank [6] – must view child protection as a core part of its mandate.

Remarkably, the Bank, which has programs dealing with education, child labour, child health/nutrition and other issues, has not yet adopted the *Convention on the Rights of the*

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[2] Blanc, C S, et al., *Urban Children in Distress*, UNICEF, 1994

[3] See an explanation of World Vision's understanding of "transformational development" in the following section, under the sub-heading Empowering communities.

[4] Fisher, J, *NonGovernments: NGOs and the Political Development of the Third World,* Kumarian Press, 1998

[5] World Vision Cambodia was researching community attitudes to child sex tourism (sexual exploitation of children by tourists) at a time when Cambodia was negotiating with the Asian Development Bank the second phase of its long-term development program known as the SEDP. For Cambodia, SEDP is the most important donor conditionality program guiding overall policy. The original draft of the SEDP emphasised tourism as a key vehicle for earning hard currency to invest in the economy, but failed to address the issue of sex tourism. With support from the Ministry of Tourism, World Vision Cambodia highlighted the serious risk that sex tourism posed to Cambodian children, and called for this to be reflected in the plan. The SEDP was re-drafted with a change in emphasis in the tourism chapter to prioritise combating sex tourism as the industry develops.
Child protection is part of the ADB's social protection strategy in combating poverty and initiatives include promoting good governance and engaging on issues facing street children. *Further information is available at* http://www.adb.org/documents/policies/social_protection/social_protection.pdf.

[6] The World Bank allocated US$1.1 billion for early childhood development from 1990 to 2000 (see: http://www.worldbank.org/children/lending_dir.html) and a further US$5.8 billion on ECD components within other programs. This investment is undermined by the Bank's unwillingness to support capacity building in law enforcement to protect children and promote their rights.

Child as a normative framework to guide its programming and planning. This exacerbates the tendency to miss crucial CEDC (children in especially difficult circumstances) needs not only in normal urban and rural contexts, but also during economic crises.

In World Vision's repeated experience, the risks faced by children rise dramatically during economic crises, with the labour, trafficking or sale of children becoming extreme coping mechanisms for families propelled into poverty. Sadly, the responses of the Bank at such times have been inadequate. The Bank's myopia on children at risk is evident in relation to the Poverty Reduction Strategy [7] processes, for the countries covered by this study and many others. [8]

Initiatives are needed that respond to the pressing priorities of children today and work to prevent the same factors causing harm to the children of tomorrow.

In 2001, working on the basis of the priority child protection issues identified in its 2000 publication, UNICEF established its top five operational priorities for the Asia-Pacific region as:

- children not in school
- children who work for wages
- children not living with biological family
- access for birth registration of children, and
- action on reported cases of harm against children.[9]

UNICEF states that inclusion of children who are at risk or in need of special protection is a key principle in planning and operating government capacity-building projects for the social sector. Approaches are needed that further governmental action to promote child rights in practical ways through child-sensitive policing, law enforcement and social policy/practice reform. These specialist interventions need to be complemented with efforts to address root causes of child abuse and neglect. Approaches require mainstreaming of child protection measures to have broad impact. Community-based projects are able to reach more children than centre-based ones, and have greater opportunity for partnership. Prevention and early intervention are needed in-community. [10] The holistic approach to child protection and development found in the CRC calls for integration and intention in *the best interests of the child* from governments. Other actors that are key to this process are NGOs, civil society, the community, and children themselves.

The Children at Risk study

Over an 18-month period in 2000–2001, World Vision undertook extensive research into the abuse and neglect of children in a number of the agency's community development areas across three continents. This undertaking, in which World Vision partnered with representatives from the Chapin Hall Centre for Children at the University of Chicago and the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN), resulted in a published report *Crying Out: Children and communities speak on child abuse and neglect*.

Also known as the "child abuse and neglect" (or "CAN") study, [11] this research revealed that children were being abused in their families and communities to a significant extent. The report made recommendations, including the following, to strengthen provisions to protect children:

- develop policy and programs that support families and build community
- develop a conceptual framework of child and youth participation
- promote public awareness, advocacy and coalition-building
- build human capacity, and
- initiate outcome-focused research and evaluation.

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[7] National PRSPs are developed with Bank advice, assessed by Bank staff and approved by its Executive Directors.

[8] The Bank in December 2002 launched a new website area for "kids", offering a perspective on development intended for youth. Disappointingly, the site's early content suggested that the Bank's view of development, even when expressed directly to children and young people, included neither the issue of child rights, nor the reality of children at risk.

[9] *Towards Monitoring Child Protection in East Asia and the Pacific*, UNICEF, May 2001

[10] *Children in Need of Special Protection in East Asia and the Pacific*, UNICEF, 2000

[11] The "CAN study" referred to throughout this report is *Crying Out: Children and communities speak on abuse and neglect*, by Karl Dorning, published by World Vision International in 2002 as part of the World Vision campaign 'Imagine a World Where Children are Safe'. Available on-line at http://www.wvi.org/imagine/can.htm

To follow up the CAN study, World Vision has reviewed approaches to protecting children at risk in five Asian countries, and conducted further analysis to enable the agency to determine what are effective programs and policies for preventing and addressing this abuse and neglect.

The research is framed by the principles expressed in the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC) as the most recognised international expression of essential foundations for sustaining and progressing human life. These are simply expressed in the "four baskets" approach to groupings of children's rights:

- survival
- development
- protection
- participation

In an effort to better understand practical strategies and tools based on experience from the field, the *Children at Risk* study identifies "good practice" against a range of social, cultural, economic and political factors. The focus of this report is on examples of both policy and programming measures that can promote protection for children at risk of violence, exploitation or neglect in poor communities, and move us closer to "a world fit for children".

The report includes examples of resources developed in the field, and experiences described herein can assist with program planning in other contexts. Examples are given of practice that has worked at community, provincial and national levels to promote the best interests of the child. Observations that emerge across the five countries as to elements of effective practice, as well as recurring challenges or limitations, are described. This study's practical approach to child protection describes methods used that may assist in designing programs. This builds on approaches in the World Vision report *A Safe World for Children: Ending abuse, violence and exploitation*, as well as those in the CAN study.

Definition of "child abuse and neglect"

A definition of child abuse and neglect can be taken from Article 19 of the CRC, which

> "…requires children's protection from "all forms of physical or mental violence, from torture and cruel or degrading treatment or punishment while in the care of parents or others. Article 19 asserts children's equal human right to physical and personal integrity. As a principle, it is linked to the right to life and maximum survival and development guaranteed under article 6." [12]

Abuse and neglect have been shown to be principal causes of children leaving home to live on the street. Children subject to abuse are also at high risk of involvement in hazardous labour, including prostitution, or in trafficking. Its presence in a community is indicative of stress.

Definition of "children at risk"

> "Children at risk are those that have become separated from or have been failed by the primary units of society that normally provide protection: their families and community."
>
> – UNICEF [13]

Children at risk face greater challenges to their survival and development. Family, community and government often compromise their best interests (Article 3, CRC). They are marginalised, exploited and more likely to die at a young age.

Participating countries

The study draws upon program experience in Cambodia, Vietnam, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and the Philippines. These five countries were selected for the research based on the criteria that they:

- are countries where World Vision has an established presence
- have distinct political, social and economic development environments

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[12] From Hodgkin, R & Newell, P, *Implementation Handbook for the Convention on the Rights of the Child*, UNICEF, 1998, p. 237

[13] *Towards Monitoring Child Protection in East Asia and the Pacific*, UNICEF, May 2001

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- offer opportunity for transferable approaches, and
- have experienced or currently endure armed conflict and its complex impacts on children.

Selection of locations

The study took place in areas where World Vision carries out child-focused development activities, and where:

- violence against children is recognised as a social problem
- national governments have ratified the CRC and made commitments to its implementation
- NGOs have active programs or partnerships to address issues of child protection
- direct service, advocacy and policy development promote change in different operational and political environments
- resources for programming (such as a program model, an operational manual or an audio-visual tool kit) have been developed from good practice in field work, and
- visits to selected program areas in both urban and rural areas were possible.

Ethics

All respondents participated voluntarily, were advised of the purpose of the study in promoting good practice in working with children, and that results may appear in a published form.

The children in the photographs taken by the study coordinator and that appear in this report, understood that a report was being written and published and that their photos might be published.

Names or descriptions of people have been changed or removed where it is believed that publishing the details could pose a risk to them.

Methodology

Information on what was considered good practice (see "Child-focused indicators of good practice" section below) was gathered by a focal point person in each country.

The Project Coordinator was based in Cambodia but visited the other four countries to spend 14 days at selected projects, conduct key informant interviews in-community, and to meet with representatives of government and of other

Table 1. UNICEF country report data [14]

	Cambodia	Indonesia	Philippines	Sri Lanka	Vietnam
Primary school attendance rate					
males	66%	93%	87%	-	94%
females	65%	93%	87%	-	93%
Under-5 mortality rank					
(of 187 countries, 1 being the highest)	30	77	88	130	88
Gross National Income per capita US$ 2001	270	680	1,040	830	410
% of budget allocated in (1992–01) to					
health	-	2	5	6	4
education	-	6	19	11	14
defence	-	4	2	17	-
% of the population living on less than $1 a day	-	8	15	-	-
Major conflict and disaster areas	X	X	X	X	-
% of children at risk of malnutrition, not attending school, armed conflict, or HIV/AIDS	40 +	20 – 40	20 – 40	20 – 40	5 – 20

[14] *The State of the World's Children 2002*, UNICEF

organisations (where possible these included Save the Children and UNICEF as two key agencies promoting children's rights in a range of countries and contexts). Key informants also included local NGOs and members of any national or regional networks that promote a safer world for children. Interviews with children, families and community leaders were also undertaken (refer **Acknowledgements** for details of contacts in each country).

Questions to key informants included:

1. How are indicators set and measured?

2. Which participatory approaches have assisted children to be active partners in their own development?

3. What are the gaps in capacity of counterparts, which reduce their effectiveness?

4. What barriers have activities encountered at family, community or national level, which have been within the scope of the project to address?

5. How have barriers or constraints been addressed?

6. Has anything been learned through mistakes in project design or operation?

7. Has there been opportunity to document and share what has been learned from mistakes or project achievements?

8. What organisational support has assisted in the successful development of the model?

9. Can the experience of this project help in other program design and planning?

10. Have the project's achievements extended beyond the project area through advocacy?

Limitations

• The study has been conducted over nine months. This gave opportunity for all countries to be visited, but with the exception of Cambodia, insufficient time was spent in each. The findings from the field visits need to be viewed with this limitation in mind, as performance must be contextually determined and interpreted.

• The project coordinator's familiarity with Cambodia needs to be acknowledged as a limitation. Outside/observer status was not possible as it was with other countries of the study.

• Efforts were made to meet with staff of, and visit, a variety of programs. Unfortunately, opportunities to spend time with the country focal point persons or relevant groups such as NGO and government working groups were constrained by either conflicting timetables or the volume of their work responsibilities.

• Limits of transportation, security concerns, and reduced freedom of association in some countries also affected these opportunities.

• Access was possible to areas that were for the most part stable, and not to areas where conflict was present or recent. This reduced the involvement of children and programs in areas where conflict-related risks were pronounced.

• A constraint in all countries was the language barrier, as questions, responses and materials often required translation or interpretation.

• In many cases, long-term effects of initiatives could not be commented on. Some projects reviewed had been operational for less than three years; they were selected because they are innovative or responding to emerging needs and offer lessons even at this early stage.

• A further constraint is the quality of information that is shared between agencies. Information exchange occurs in the form of published reports and studies, but some valuable information of what is learned through practice is not sufficiently highlighted. Opportunity to gain further detail is not always available. Further

information may emerge if discussion is possible through personal contacts between agencies. In general, there is interest to share what works, but not always lessons learned and challenges experienced; this limits the analysis of good practice highlighted in this report.

In the broad task of promoting a safer world for children, it is hoped that this study – while regional in nature – will highlight themes or approaches relevant to other regions.

Child-focused indicators of good practice

Focus groups discussions were held, where possible, with community groups of adults and children in project locations. Discussion followed themes of the study and used survey tools (refer **Appendix**) to identify community perceptions of child protection risks, and examples of activities that reduced these risks.

Programs reviewed had identified a range of child protection risk factors, which could be clustered under these headings:

- *Sociological:* Lack of opportunity for children to participate in decisions that affect them. Limits of prescribed gender roles, leisure time or options were identified as significant contributors to poor attitude and practice to children's issues on the part of adults and community leaders. These contributed to inappropriate discipline and to harmful or exploitive practices.
- *Economic:* Poverty was identified as a significant contributing factor that can lead children to being placed in hazardous labour or being subjected to physical/sexual abuse.
- *Legal:* Lack of community-level infrastructure or links with government agencies of child protection was identified as contributing to inaction on known issues of child protection.

- *Advocacy/political:* Poor monitoring of actual cases and links between policy and practice were identified as contributing to situations where child protection issues were not being addressed.

Child protection in the context of a community development program

Empowering community

World Vision's principal development model works with people, communities and structures across a geographical area over a period of 10–15 years, to address issues of access and capacity, to measurably improve the situation for children, and to accompany a process through which children, families and communities move towards wholeness of life with dignity, justice and hope. World Vision calls this approach "transformational development".

These communities may be characterised by hardships including frequent flood or drought, poor infrastructure, low levels of access to services, or a high prevalence of health needs. Common program initiatives include agricultural and infrastructure improvement, health service development and integrated development to promote sustainable livelihoods. The approach usually includes community organising to build ownership and involvement on important issues of common concern. Long-term, widespread, measurable and sustainable outcomes are important to donors and implementing agencies alike.

Current approaches

Development aims to benefit children in communities through infrastructure improvement and livelihood improvement, which enhance the protection a family can give to its children as hunger and poverty lessen. Measures that address or prevent debt are particularly important, since debt

leads to landlessness in rural communities and a precarious existence in urban areas. One survey in Cambodia found that 45% of rural families lost their land as a result of debt; the largest single category was medical-related debt. [15] Many children work to pay off the debts of their families, or are used as security for loans.

Development involving communities in planning and implementation has significant positive impacts for children in a range of areas. Allan Fowler summarises the intention of the integrated approach in the table below from his book *Striking a Balance*.[16]

Child sponsorship

Funding mechanisms for community development work vary. One way is through creating personal links between those who have resources and those who need resources, as through child sponsorship. Personalising the challenge of development in this way cuts a path through the "macro" context of need, with a focus on improving the development of children. Agencies such as PLAN, World Vision and now UNICEF use this approach to work in many countries where more long-term involvement is possible. Experience gained in improving lives over time, through increasing access to basic services for example, has led to a realisation of the need to better understand and address issues of child abuse and neglect.

Selection of areas to prioritise is important to ensure that child sponsorship support is directed to where it is needed and can be effective. One approach is to identify target communities, families and children at risk through comparing baseline information. In setting criteria, it is important to draw on a range of sources, to build local ownership including by levels of government, as well as to manage the trade-offs between economic efficiency and political viability. [17]

Long-term commitment to working in an area ensures greater opportunity to reduce poverty, measurably improve child well-being, and empower communities. [18] World Vision's sponsorship-based transformational development approach usually operates in a given area for 10–15 years, and works to promote self-sufficiency where communities move closer to being able to provide for themselves. Measurable indicators are developed to monitor positive changes in the following areas:

- well-being of children and families in-community
- children empowered as agents of change
- transformed relationships
- interdependent and empowered communities, and
- transformed structures and systems.

Table 2. Concepts of capacity growth

	Means	**Process**	**Ends**
Capacity growth of the community	Strengthens the ability of the community to improve overall civic impact	Brings mutually supporting relations and understanding among sub-sectors of a community	Achieves confident and powerful interaction with other sectors and social actors based on shared strategies and learning contributing to social capital

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[15] Biddulph, R, "Cambodia Land Study Project", in *Landlessness and Development Research 1999–2000*, Oxfam, 2000

[16] Fowler, A, *Striking a Balance: A guide to enhancing the effectiveness of non-governmental organisations in international development*, Earthscan Publications, 1997; reprint 1998

[17] Klugman, J (ed.), *A Source Book for Poverty Reduction Strategies*, unpublished draft, World Bank, 2001

[18] Miles, G & Stephenson P, *Children at Risk Guidelines*, Volume 4, Tear Fund, 2000

introduction

Current challenges of project design and operation

Inclusion of vulnerable groups

"A fundamental political aspect of safety net design and targeting is the choice of whether to help the poor and ultra-poor or the more vocal, politically more powerful groups." [19]

Issues of improved access to education and health care to benefit children are a consistent feature of community development. Responses to other issues that place children at risk, such as disability, domestic violence and exploitation, are often regarded as specialist areas and not included as part of program design. Inclusion is possible, however, and is a feature of a number of projects; experience in these environments can be shared and useful approaches extended upon.

The presence of a minority group as part of a beneficiary population needs to be acknowledged intentionally in project design. Projects working where such groups experience discrimination, violence or lack of opportunity need to account for the political dimensions of the task as much as the service delivery concerns. Approaches where advocacy is clearly part of project design are able to extend from the "micro" community context to the "macro" national and political context. Unfortunately, however, this is often not the case: capacity to advocate is often not part of design but an added task at the discretion of project staff; the result is that opportunity to promote change on issues of social justice, beyond direct service provision, is limited.

Save the Children's strong child-focused advocacy approach in Sri Lanka and Indonesia offers good examples of linking local concerns to a national agenda through advocacy. World Vision's approach in Vietnam has facilitated significant change through advocating for disabled children while demonstrating inclusion through practice. In Cambodia, World Vision has conducted research into community and institutional views on the problem of child sex tourism in cooperation with key government ministries and national children's organisations,[20] and successfully advocated for intentional action to combat child sex tourism as part of development of the tourist industry. Cambodia's Government, the private sector and international financial institutions such as the Asian Development Bank now include action to strengthen child protection in this area.

"Poverty is the single greatest force which creates the flow of children into the workplace…" [21]

Poverty

Child labour is a common phenomenon in many poor areas. Approaches to raising awareness and response on child labour at the community level are an established feature of some development work, but there is opportunity for extension from lessons learned. If not addressed, this gap in project design allows for continued acceptance of children being part of family economies in ways that may be damaging to them.

Understanding attitudes and promoting alternative views in the interests of children are sometimes required. Consideration is needed for families on the edge who are not eligible for credit. Poverty-enforced mobility and insecurity increase the risks that their children face. They may move on from a rural community and drift to the city, where the children will be at greater risk from predators. Highly mobile families need a response more typical of relief projects but this is often not available; the predominant mode of assistance is through sustainable development programs, for which they are not eligible. Cambodia offers models of good-practice targeted assistance, from the League for the Promotion and Defence of Human Rights (LICADHO), Mith Samlanh/Friends, and World Vision.

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[19] Klugman, 2001

[20] *Children's Work, Adults' Play: Child sex tourism – the problem in Cambodia*, World Vision International, 2001

[21] International Labour Organization Conference, 86th Session, Geneva, 1996

Education access for all

Access to good quality, appropriate education is a key intervention to build survival skills and foster development. [22] It needs to be extended to as many children as possible. Greater attention is needed to identify and address the barriers for all children who are not attending school, to reduce risks faced by children living on the edge. Inclusion of child protection in the curriculum, through teaching on the CRC and involving schools in monitoring approaches, is one strategy that is possible for agencies to negotiate. Monitoring mechanisms in project designs can be extended to social issues such as the targeting of children for hazardous labour or involvement in armed conflict. World Vision's partnership with educational institutions in Indonesia and Sri Lanka has shown methods of improving the capacity of schools, teachers and students not only for the purposes of education itself, but also in support of child protection.

Emerging child protection issues

Human trafficking in various forms is a feature of many poor communities. Traffickers visit ignorant or desperate parents, promising jobs for children. It is most important to build awareness among children and other community members about the risks, and to increase the effectiveness of local protection mechanisms.

Further attention to emerging issues, such as the phenomenon and needs of "AIDS orphans", is needed. Such children should be linked to support structures within their own communities, as a first preference. They need to retain contact with their community but avoid being used as domestic workers for a family. They are often undernourished, have low education levels and low hopes for the future.

Strategies that don't include children at risk will miss opportunities to advocate, promote change and nurture hope. Project design

should include promoting community concern and specific assistance to families at risk, and monitoring mechanisms, which can link with national protection initiatives.[23] Information on human trafficking and working children, for example, has value beyond the community. Cambodia's collaborative project with UNICEF, the United Nations Cambodia Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and World Vision show approaches that can strengthen an institution and bring justice. [24]

Linking the "micro", "meso" and "macro" responses needed for child protection

> *"Acknowledging the systemic nature of things means seeing and acting within the big picture. While the big picture may not mean that our actions must be big… it does mean that we must integrate our actions at higher levels and aggregations than the individual, the "micro" level all by itself." [25]*

Grassroots work with children is affected by globalisation. Increasingly local activity has a national, regional and international context. This has implications for advocacy and local capacity, as local knowledge now needs to extend to regional plans and international policy.

For example, the emerging market of tourism brings with it the feature of cross-border crime, and risks to children in the form of sex tourism. All countries of the study have experienced the issue of foreign nationals travelling with intent to abuse. Action to influence government policy and response from Cambodia and the Philippines is shared. Examples of good practice have been identified, involving children as advocates locally, regionally and internationally.

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[22] Fallon, P & Tzannotos, Z, *Child Labour: Issues and directions for the World Bank*, 1998

[23] UNICEF, *Towards Monitoring Child Protection in East Asia and the Pacific*, 2001

[24] Boonpata, P & Kane, J, *Trafficking of Children: The problem and responses worldwide*, ILO, 2001

[25] Dichter, T, *Demystifying Policy Dialog: How the private non-profit sector can have impact on host country policies*, 1986, (as appears in Fisher, J, 1998)

introduction

Planning long-term for child protection

Market forces, as well as demonstrated need, influence program design. Initiatives required to reduce risks to children or promote child protection can be integrated into broader development, but some action needed is specific, costly and time-consuming. Opportunity costs are considered as part of decisions on effective and sustainable action. The donor environment, though distant from the project, is a significant factor in prioritising issues of need.

Recognition of this relationship and its implications for resource allocation in support of existing or new initiatives is important for implementers and supporters alike. Increased enquiry and accountability requirements from donors are not always accompanied by adequate resources, nor are they sufficiently responsive to changes in the operating environment. Organisations need to assess how best to diversify their funding base, including the development of a national resource pool, while ensuring the highest child protection standards.

A government-supported funding window may be open for 3–6 years, whereas issues of child protection are recurrent and require integration into an agency's core functions. Periodic changes in the priorities of development assistance available through government funding affect long-term planning and implementation, and often where alternative sources are not able to be found, initiatives close. The issues they addressed, such as domestic violence, sexual abuse or disability, continue apace.

More broadly, donor governments and international financial institutions, such as the World Bank, need to consider how their policies or requirements may be impacting a country's ability to resource and support child protection initiatives.

Greater intention is needed for child protection initiatives to survive as a priority amid the range of more common development responses available to agencies. Project planning that includes sequential steps is one strategy that has been shown to allow innovative responses, to build on gains made.

Responses

Best practice in programming for child protection differs from broad-based community development in intention and design. Programs that go further in promoting local and systemic change for children at risk have included a focus on a special need in the community or have dynamic partnerships in areas of common concern.

Integrated approaches

Integrated responses include intentional child-focused development strategies to building community. They promote attitude change among children in a community: children become more active in their own development and on issues that are affecting them. This has led in turn to improved attitude/behaviour towards children from family and community. It has been integrated with community development to some effect in different countries covered in the present study, and is worthy of further support. It also offers greater potential for sustainability, since it becomes a community not an NGO activity.

Examples were seen in the Philippines, Indonesia and Sri Lanka where integrated child-focused activity had resulted in participatory community structures giving children a voice on issues of concern.

Faith-based groups that have support and commitment from community members, including children, are often an important driver of change. This is particularly the case if they address human concerns holistically: from spiritual well-being of individuals, to relationship and community ethics, to issues of social and economic justice. [26]

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[26] World Vision's understanding of the Christian faith is holistic – meaning that it involves a connection between personal faith, service to others, human rights and social justice, and caring for the earth. World Vision is interested in empowering people, including children, to be leaders in promoting compassion, justice and human dignity and rights, whatever their faith. World Vision respects freedom of religion, and proselytising is against World Vision International policy.

Specific initiatives

More specific approaches increase learning and influence on particular issues such as children affected by conflict, exploitation or disability. This work has influence in areas of broader community development, such as government legislation/practice on child protection, and education access. Specific projects tend to be time-bound, responsive and have a regional or international dimension. Their objectives will give more weighting to actions that demonstrably improve institutions or frameworks impacting on children.

Examples were seen in Cambodia, Vietnam and the Philippines where local issues were linked to regional or international concerns giving opportunity for advocacy and effective partnership with government. Both the integrated and the specific approaches include practical expression of key areas of recommendation from the CAN study: [27]

- *Integrated actions that support families* give greater weighting to defining and applying frameworks for child/youth participation as part of their approach to building community; promoting public awareness, through coalitions; and furthering local policy and programs that impact community.

- *Specific initiatives* also build public awareness on an issue for a measurable purpose, such as the creation of legal protection mechanisms for children. They may build human capacity to initiate outcome-focused research and evaluation. Their objectives will give more weighting to actions that demonstrably improve institutions or frameworks impacting on children. The political aspect of promoting change takes into account community issues *vis-à-vis* a national or regional environment. Improving domestic legal frameworks of importance to children is but one example where implications are local, national, regional and international.

Limitations arise if each area is pursued exclusively. Integrated action can address a range of issues but be unable to bring sufficient resources to key areas that may emerge from its general activity. The CAN study, for example, identified domestic violence as a high concern in areas where broader community development operates. These activities can sometimes incorporate a response if it is in keeping with operational constraints, donor requirements and staff capacity. It requires a change in direction for a project that may have general livelihood improvement as a main focus. On the other hand, specific initiatives may become so narrow that their sustainable impact is threatened as it has few links with other areas of priority. Also, specific projects are often more affected by shifts in political will.

For example, in seeking improved legal protection of children (highlighted as a need in the CAN study), changes to laws cannot be integrated with most community development activities. Yet the impact of poor enforcement is felt at the community level. Program planners need to identify approaches appropriate to their operational environment and to the nature of the risks to children.

Child protection as a specific program focus

Promotion of a safer world for children requires approaches that seek to strengthen government protection mechanisms, as the CAN study [28] highlighted. Initiatives need to work on local, national, regional and international levels, as all these dimensions are involved in understanding and responding to this type of risk. Children and community members see and experience injustice, as the following extract from an Indonesian poem shows; they form views as to who is responsible for discomfort or poverty of choice; resentment builds and sometimes spills over into violence.

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[27] Dorning, K, *Crying Out*, World Vision International, 2002

[28] Dorning, K, *Crying Out*, World Vision International, 2002

introduction

Because we are abandoned on the streets
And you own all the shade…
Because we endure floods
And you party on pleasure boats …
So we don't like you.

Because we are silenced
And you never stop nagging…
Because we are threatened
And you use violence against us…
So we say to you No.

Because we may not choose
And you are free to make plans…
Because we only have sandals
And you are free to use rifles
Because we must be polite
And you have jails
So No and No to you.

Because we are the current of the river
And you are the stones without heart …
So the water will erode away the stones.

– W S Rendra, Indonesia [29]

In Indonesia, Sri Lanka and parts of the Philippines, tensions and attitudes affect children. Work in-community can assist in reducing cause for hatred, but influence is also needed with systems and government. Structures that don't offer protection or that contribute to recurring difficulties can be reviewed if political will to acknowledge the problem can be generated.

Freedom from exploitation is upheld through such international instruments as the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC) and the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Child exploitation that crosses borders requires international cooperation among law enforcement agencies. While this is now more possible through extra-territorial legislation, gaps in capacity and differing legal systems are barriers to due process.

Countries where rule of law is strong have mechanisms to address such crimes. These include not only the legal system but also medical and human services. Public debate enables views to be expressed, police, judiciary and government held to account, and the need for change discussed. Change is possible through mechanisms of good governance and appropriate resources accompanying commitment. Developing countries do not have the same level of capacity or resources and face many barriers in achieving freedom for children from the violence of sexual exploitation and trafficking. It is here where the scale and nature of exploitation remains unacceptably high.

It is in this context that outcome-focused partnerships and networks can be a substantial resource in promoting positive change for children. The CAN study recommended *proactive approaches to develop clear internal policy/procedures that act on cases of child abuse and neglect*. World Vision Cambodia has worked in partnership to build government capacity to reduce the risk children face of trafficking and sexual exploitation. Again, a table from Allan Fowler's book *Striking a Balance* summarises the intention of the approach:

Table 3. Concepts of capacity growth [30]

	Means	**Process**	**Ends**
Capacity growth of civil society and government institution	Improves the ability of primary stakeholders to identify and carry out activities to solve problems	Enables and stimulates stronger civic interactions and communication, and conflict mediation and resolution in society, thereby enhancing social capital	Increases ability of primary stakeholders to engage with and influence the political arena and socio-economic system in accordance with their interests

[29] Rendra, W S, "Poem of an Angry Man", from *Your Will Be Done*, Youthdesk, Indonesia, 1984 (as appears in Takenaka, M & O'Grady, R, *The Bible Through Asian Eyes*, Pace Publishing in association with Asian Christian Art Association, New Zealand, 1991)

[30] Fowler, A, *Striking a Balance*, 1997(8)

Cambodia

Working with children against exploitative labour

"Approaches that build the capacity of children build hope."

Young Cambodian girl scavenging for scraps on a garbage dump

Photo: Jon Warren

Background

Child protection concerns identified

Children from marginalised urban communities in many of Asia's cities spend much time on the streets scavenging or begging. Adding to the risks inherent in being poor, the nature of this work often places these children's health and safety at risk, and many of these children are at high risk of abuse and exploitation. The International Labour Organization states that child labour globally is believed to be increasing and becoming more harmful. [1]

World Vision has responded to the needs of street children and working children in

Phnom Penh, Cambodia, since 1993. In Cambodia, there are over 1,000 children who live on the street and 10–15,000 who go on to the streets regularly to work or beg. The pervasiveness and visibility of child labour in Cambodia is linked to the country's relatively young population, with 52% of the population aged under 18. In one poor urban community of 36,238 people, for example, there are 19,221 children under 18 years old.

World Vision Cambodia works directly with street children and also, where appropriate, links with other services and businesses that assist children in building their future. Research, partnerships, project implementation and reviews have been

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[1] Regional Working Group on Child Labour, *Improving Action-Oriented Research on the Worst Forms of Child Labour*, 1999

Child scrap collectors at work on a garbage dump truck

Photo: World Vision Cambodia

undertaken that reveal some key principles that apply when working with children in poor urban communities. Targeted approaches, that increase the options available to children and their families, reduce the risks of exploitation and involvement in hazardous labour.

The principles for program planning in the following section are taken from World Vision Cambodia's publication *Look Before You Leap: Strategic approaches to urban child labour*. [2]

Working principles/ philosophy: An integrated approach that builds child participation

Understanding and respecting the child labourer's perspective

It is widely accepted that poverty is a primary factor that contributes to the entry of children into hazardous or exploitive labour. While other factors exist, most children working at the Phnom Penh city garbage dump or on the streets began when there was a crisis impacting family income or expenses, such as a parent's business failing

or a medical emergency.

However, this does not fully explain why children may continue their labour even after such crises pass. During our initial research among children who work as itinerant scrap collectors in Phnom Penh, it was found that the children often have other motivations for working:

> *"Child scrap collectors differ from many other child labourers in that they are self-employed and usually possess a great deal of autonomy in their work. For instance, rather than giving all of the money to their parents at the end of the day, many children told us that they kept some for themselves to buy snacks, play snooker and video games, and even gamble. In this sense they are not unlike children in developed countries who want spending money of their own. This was also indicated during group discussions in which a significant number said they would continue to work at the dump at least part-time, even if their parents earned enough money to send them to school and provide a decent living standard."* [3]

While perhaps not present in the beginning, over time the children may develop positive attitudes such as these towards their work that may contribute to their long-term involvement. There are, in fact, many reasons which make scrap collecting an attractive occupation for children (as well as adults): it offers flexible hours and year-round availability, is close to home (particularly for those living near the dump), and is accessible to people of a wide range of ages and educational levels. These are just a few of the advantages that the community sees yet the outsider rarely notices, and that are crucial to understand in order to offer alternatives which are accepted and supported by the children and their parents. It has been noted in ILO studies on child labour that the unit of analysis is usually an adult concern such as the family or the school. But "childhood is an interesting phenomenon in its own right. Child-centred studies/statistics are different

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[2] Gourley, S, Un, V & Gray, L, *Look Before You Leap: Strategic approaches to urban child labour*, World Vision Cambodia, 1999. This book, which has not been widely circulated outside Cambodia, contains valuable insights into working with the urban poor to tackle the issue of child labour, to which this present chapter is indebted.

[3] *Child Scrap Collectors in Phnom Penh: A profile,* World Vision Cambodia, 1997

and allow researchers to examine more relevant dimensions of children's lives." [4]

This process of understanding is based on principles of mutual respect and, as noted, is a crucial first step in determining appropriate responses. There are also several other basic principles that World Vision Cambodia found were important to incorporate into the project activities assisting child scrap collectors, which have broader application to programs addressing child rights issues. These principles, which could also be described as a philosophy of work, acted as "guiding lights" to the team and greatly aided the decision-making and problem-solving processes during the initial design and later development of the activities. These are summarised below:

1. Parents should be involved with and accountable for their children's participation and development.

World Vision Cambodia believes that parents have the God-given responsibility to care for and raise their children, and that all parents, no matter how poor, can contribute to their children's development. As a result, we do not want our activities in any way to diminish that responsibility but rather to encourage and enable the parents to fulfil their roles in increasing measure. This is in line with the UN *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC), which in its Preamble states:

"...the family, as the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members and particularly children, should be afforded the necessary protection and assistance so that it can fully assume its responsibilities within the community."

The duties of parents in ensuring the development of their children is also in accordance within the laws of the Kingdom of Cambodia, which state that

"Parents shall have the duty to take care of and educate their children to become good citizens."

"Parents have the obligation to love, bring up and take care of their child's education; that is, to develop the idea of patriotism, love of education, love of work in the spirit of international cooperation and respect for the State properties, [and] rights and properties of others." [5]

In respect of these principles, we require that parents be well-informed on, and in agreement with, all aspects of their children's participation in projects, and involved in regular meetings and (when necessary) problem-solving discussions with both children and staff present. Parents also share in some of the costs and are financially accountable for any World Vision Cambodia or other privately-owned assets that their children use. This is formalised by agreements that are understood and signed by the parents, their children, privately-contracted trainers/third parties, and sometimes by village authorities as well.

2. Children can share responsibility for their own development.

While it is widely acknowledged in development circles that children have the *right* to participate in their development, we also believe that it is important that they are allowed to take *responsibility* for their participation. The UNICEF-commissioned essay *Children's Participation: From tokenism to citizenship* comments on the value of this:

"The Convention [on the Rights of the Child], being more concerned with protection, does not emphasise the responsibilities which go with rights. (But) children need to learn that with the rights of children come responsibilities. In order to learn these responsibilities, children need to engage in collaborative activities with other persons including those who are older and more experienced than themselves". [6]

Without this accountability, children will miss many of the experiences and lessons

[4]   Regional Working Group on Child Labour, 1999

[5]   *Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia*, Rights and Obligations of Citizens, Article 47 (adopted 21/09/93) and Law on Marriage and Family, Section V: Relationship of Father, Mother and Child, Article 115 (passed 17/7/89)

[6]   Hart, R A, *Children's Participation: From tokenism to citizenship*, UNICEF International Child Development Centre, 1992

Cambodia

This drawing by a child scrap collector shows details of life and work on a garbage dump. While the artist used bright colours and the picture is not entirely gloomy, note (left) two children dreaming of leaving the dump and going to school, and (right) two children sniffing glue from bags.

Photo: World Vision Cambodia

of life that lead to maturity in adulthood. Moreover, in order to achieve effective and sustainable income generation, it is crucial that the children learn of the personal and financial costs involved in running their own business. Consequently, we require them to share in the costs by providing part of the capital, buying their own supplies and materials, providing their own lunches, etc. They are also accountable (along with their parents) for the care and maintenance of any equipment they use, and paying for their repair or replacement if necessary.

Overall, the children are given responsibility for developing their own skills and businesses and, ultimately, earning their own profits. In addition to contributing to character development and value formation, this helps keep the children focused and serious about the tasks at hand. Another important benefit is the sense of accomplishment and pride that results when the children successfully meet their obligations and reap the rewards of hard-earned income, skills and praise from parents and staff.

3. An emphasis on poverty alleviation through income generation

Emergence of social problems where there was a lack of employment opportunity for parents was a finding of World Vision's study on child abuse and neglect. [7] Increased attention to improving economic opportunity of families at risk was a recommendation. Because of the role poverty plays in child labour, and its effect on the family as a whole, we decided that the goal of our income-generating activities for children should have the concrete result of a net increase in income.

This is in line with World Vision Cambodia's overall strategy of poverty alleviation, which includes income generation for the children's parents, so that the whole family is targeted and involved in increasing their household income. This approach is supported by the experience of other groups working with scrap collectors such as the Association for the Protection of the Environment in Cairo, Egypt, which found that

> *"…making money had proved, in many other similar development projects, to be the most efficient way of creating change. It was faster and more appealing than health awareness or literacy. The very dire context of poverty and deprivation signified that any programme had to have an immediate effect on peoples' lives. Economic empowerment was the result."* [8]

The bottom line is that if livelihood and income issues are not addressed, poverty will continue to be a threat to the well-being of the child and his/her family. The situation is summed up well by Assefa Bequele in *Child Labour and Minimum Social Standards: The challenge for Asia*:

> *"Last but not least is the question of what is being done to deal with poverty, with the situation of the poorest of the poor?*

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[7] Dorning, K, *Crying Out: Children and communities speak on abuse and neglect*, World Vision International, 2002 (http://www.wvi.org/imagine/can.htm)

[8] *Education to Fight Exclusion*, No. 3, UNESCO, 1999, p. 17

Laws are important and necessary. Schools are important and necessary. But all these will fail if they are not supported by commitment and a programme of action to combat poverty. Poverty is the single most important cause of child labour. And the single most important weapon to combat poverty is productive employment". [9]

Poverty alleviation through effective income generation should therefore be a priority component in child labour projects whenever possible. This can include the participation of the children themselves, through vocational opportunities that provide reasonable financial rewards – an important factor as noted in section 5 below.

4. **Activities should provide the skills and opportunity for long-term, sustainable employment.**

While this may sound obvious, many children's projects emphasise removing children from hazardous occupations, or developing skills, with little emphasis on whether the activity will actually lead to gainful employment (or self-employment) and concrete income. An ILO/IPEC review of 16 child labour action programs with skill-training components in Southeast Asia found that "direct economic gains to the children participating in vocational skills training were limited." [10] While it was argued that this was not necessarily the goal of the programs, it stands to reason that vocational training should lead to productive employment and regular earnings. [11]

This was impressed on World Vision Cambodia's team while we were conducting our initial research on the community, when one day a woman complained bitterly about the skill training her son had received from another organisation. The training appeared thorough and lasted for one year, and yet after graduating the boy was unemployed. "Why did they give him training and then not find him a job?" she exclaimed, adding that he was now idle at home. While this also illustrated to us the importance of parental involvement and responsibility (as ultimately the boy and parents should be involved in actively seeking employment with his new skills), it emphasised to us that beneficiaries are dealing with economic realities that they expect and depend on vocational training to improve. It also illustrated the fruitlessness of spending time and money on training while being shortsighted about the end goal of employment. We therefore decided that our income-generation activities would be focused on achieving employment and regular income, rather than on the short-term goal of learning skills.

5. **Children's profits should be equal to or greater than scrap collecting.**

Once employment (or self-employment) is achieved, if the activity does not provide a return at least equal to the child's previous occupation, there will be little long-term support from the children or their parents, and they will likely return to the hazardous, yet more profitable occupation. This is a particularly important factor when a child has contributed a significant amount to his or her family's income for a long period of time which the entire household has come to depend on. Therefore, it was decided that any income-generation alternatives offered would have a goal of meeting or exceeding the children's previous earnings from scrap collecting, which typically average 1000 *riels* per day. [12]

Impact of the project

At the time of writing, direct beneficiaries of this project are approximately 250 lower-poor and middle-poor urban families, including 509 children who work as scrap collectors at the garbage dump. Approximately 600 Adults and 1,000 children of lower-poor and middle-poor families living

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[9] *Child Labour and Minimum Social Standards: The challenge for Asia*, IPEC Asia Papers No. 1, ILO/IPEC Southeast Asia, 1995

[10] *Alternatives to Child Labour: A review of action programmes with a skills training component in Asia*, IPEC Asia Papers No. 4, ILO/IPEC Southeast Asia, 1998

[11] The report further recommended that the programs should employ job placement officers, "because an efficient and effective job placement officer can make an action programme a success by ensuring that all graduates become successfully employed or self-employed once they have reached the appropriate age."

[12] 1000 riels is equivalent to USD 0.25, or the cost of a packet of chewing gum. Older children more skilled at collecting and those who work longer hours (in some cases up to 12 hours per day) can earn more, while younger children often earn less than this amount.

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near the garbage dump have also benefited from the project's advocacy to local authorities.

In the 12 months until October 2002, 48 children had been involved in a vocational training activity resulting in alternative livelihoods, 658 loans had been made to families for small businesses, 1,998 children were involved in non-formal education, and 962 children were participating in 23 Children's Clubs that had been established. The project has broadened its focus to support social change: seven Village Development Committees representing a population of 38,000 are assisted to engage with local authorities on a range of issues around urban poor policy, child development/protection, and land tenure.

Alternative income-generating activities allow children and families to meet their needs and recover some of their dignity.
Photos: World Vision Cambodia

Increasing options through micro-enterprise development/micro-credit

In relatively stable settings, where families are able to respond to a partnership that involves responsibility as well as assistance, World Vision Cambodia has found that integrated approaches using micro-enterprise development (MED) or micro-credit work well. More than 9,000 families representing 54,000 people across 12 districts access US$300,000 through this approach. Measures to promote child protection are linked to project operation in the following ways:[13]

1. All client passbooks have development messages (HIV/AIDS, child rights and gender). The child rights messages, conceptualised by World Vision Cambodia's CEDC team, include:

    a) Protection of children against physical, mental and emotional abuse and responsibility of parents in the development (physical, mental, emotional) of their children

    b) Children's right to education

    c) Parents' responsibility on discipline and moral values

    d) Children's right to self-expression, play, socialisation, etc.

    e) Contact offices/hotlines (World Vision Cambodia CEDC team and Ministry of Interior) on child trafficking, labour or abuse.

2. Staff ensure that clients read and understand all these messages before passbooks are disseminated to clients.

3. Indicators are set to show impacts of the activity on children. One MED evaluation conducted in 2002 showed that an immediate action of borrowers in the sample village banks was to send their children back to school, right after having enough means to pay for school expenses as a result of bigger disposable incomes.

4. In addition to action against exploitative child labour and integration of child-focused indicators into planned MED activity, specific focus is needed on positive links with the labour market. This can occur with children still living with family through day programs and can be accompanied by credit approaches that build the capacity of poor families.

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[13]
Fallon & Tzannotos, 1998

A family that has benefited from alternative income activities, in front of their house

Photo: Jon Warren/World Vision

Barriers

- Emerging challenges encountered include the dynamic nature of the urban environment. Children are affected by rapid population growth and by planning which is slow to respond and implemented equally slowly.

- A principal barrier is lack of clear secured land tenure status for the urban poor. This, coupled with an unclear government urban poor strategy, makes planning for improvement difficult.

- Poverty reduction plans, including urban resettlement, are made and implemented in ways that have other negative social consequences (isolation from work, loss of habitat, resettlement on flood-prone land) for the urban poor.

- The urban poor comprise 19.7% of Phnom Penh's population, according to a report from UN Habitat (August 2002). Population increase is 8%, up from 5% in 1998, and growth further congests areas where the poor live. This underlines the need for sound urban planning as well as NGO engagement to provide direct support and monitor changes needed.

- Length of training, low labour costs and competition mean that profit margins are low in many businesses. These are discouragements for some children who know they can earn up to a dollar a day scavenging with no training. The rewards for children over time need to be clear early on, or children are tempted to discontinue training.

Vocational training for social reintegration

It would be instructive at this point to review the vocational training program of the Mith Samlanh/Friends organisation in Phnom Penh.

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The Mith Samlanh/Friends vocational traing program

Mith Samlanh/Friends have worked with street children since 1994, and in addition to accommodation provision, government capacity building, advocacy and family reconciliation, have developed a respected training program. They have a number of partners, which have included World Vision, Save the Children Australia and UNICEF. Their good practice is contributing to a UNICEF initiative to address needs of street children in Laos.

Mith Samlanh/Friends' overall objective is, in accordance with the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC), to support the social reintegration of street children through reintegration into families, and reintegration into public school, employment, the Cambodian culture and citizenship.

Project objective

The objective of the Mith Samlanh/Friends vocational training program is to provide training to youth (aged 15–25) in need, thereby improving their self-confidence and access to income generating activities; this leading to gainful employment and social reintegration.

The trainings respond to *the needs of both the students and the market*. Given that street youth usually have very low academic levels, the training is mostly practical. After training, students are either oriented into further training or supported to enter the professional world (placement in companies or creation of private businesses).

Outputs

- 11 vocational skill-training workshops are offered to street children in mechanics, masonry, commerce, welding, electronics, electricity, farming, sewing, hairdressing for men and beauty for women, and domestic service/cooking.
- Over a one-year period, about 500 children register in the Training Centre.

Approach

Training is divided into *modules*. This allows new students to start at any time of the year. Each module corresponds to a level of training and to a placement opportunity, and concludes with an examination. A diploma signed by the Ministry of Social Affairs, Labour and Vocational Training is given to students following the final examination.

Students are encouraged to be responsible for themselves and this is effectively implemented in the training. For example, students write requests for buying their training material, get the money from the accountant, buy their material at the market and return the receipts and the change themselves.

The training produces goods and services that are sold through contracts, external orders, and businesses run by students. This training in a real professional environment provides revenue to the students, shows them how to run a future business, and also aims at bringing the training program to a reasonable level of sustainability.

All students benefit from *literacy lessons*, including: reading and writing, mathematics (mostly accounting), history/geography, and science (human body). Students who are interested can have English lessons when they are literate in Khmer. Cooking and commerce students all have English lessons because it is needed for their training. During their training time, children also have access to *cultural activities* (theatre, dance,

painting, sport, music); these are presented in shows that develop the children's self-confidence and self-esteem.

A *placement* team is in charge of job placement and also family reintegration. Many professional reintegrations are linked with family reintegration, since many former students decide to locate themselves close to their families. A major effort is made to ensure ongoing follow-up, in order to monitor the situation and allow for early trouble-shooting when needed. Follow-up is essential for the success of placement.

Some indicators of success

- the number of former street youth reintegrated through job placement (approximately 100 per year)

- revenues of former students (between $30–70 per month)

- the number of successful family reintegrations built on a safe basis (663 over a 21-month period)

- a constant need to increase and improve the training (to adapt to children's needs, market needs, obtain new materials, improve literacy, and improve the recreational and self-expression activities)

- a growing number of children wanting to access training (average 270 students a month between April and September 2002, compared with an average 220 students a month between April 2001 and March 2002)

- demand from companies to employ students (there is greater demand from companies for cooking and serving graduates; mechanics, electronics students and beauticians are the most difficult to place in companies)

- the success of the businesses run by the students (the setting up of three restaurants, a sewing production unit, small shops in mechanics and a hairdresser, and a shop run by commerce students selling and repairing products from the other training, such as motorbikes, sound systems, clothes)

- positive feedback from street children on the NGO's work. One youth said:

  "I came to Phnom Penh to start my independent life in hope that I would have a job. I could not find a job and had no place to stay. Step by step I adapted to street life. I did some bad things for my survival in the streets. Weeks were flying away…One day I met with a young man of Friends. He asked me to come and visit and I agreed. I came to a huge centre and saw a lot of children playing and having fun. I decided at once to stay…

  I was then enrolled in an electronics training class that I dreamed to study a long time ago. I hope I will find a good job and start my independent life."

Lessons learned

- The child/young person needs to be addressed in a holistic way.

- It is important to promote the student's responsibilities.

- A student who is not ready mentally or emotionally to work should not be placed.

- A student should be placed in a position he/she has been trained for.

- Close exchange of information with other service providers is important to avoid duplication. Linkage also allows for setting up a national network for follow-up of placed youth.

- Follow-up is essential to ensure success.

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Mith Samlanh/Friends vocational training program *(continued)*	
Barriers	How they are addressed
Child level: • An increasing number of youth are HIV-positive (15% in Training Centre)	• Positive living approach • Emotional support and medical support • Exploring access to anti-retroviral drugs
Family level: • Families not allowing their children to get training and education because they lose income when a child stops working in the streets • Families coming to "feed off" successfully placed students, taking significant income away and discouraging the young person	• Including the family in the social work with the child when possible • Micro-credit initiatives • Various support systems to family members • Follow-up to troubleshoot
Local level: • The municipality of Phnom Penh is dealing with street children issues through forced relocations. This makes work with children difficult because they hide.	• Gaining media focus on the municipality's policy; a meeting with the municipality and international bodies and donors; definition of common policies/projects
National level: • HIV/AIDS and other crises bring many children to the streets (140,000 AIDS-orphaned children are expected by end 2004; as many as 30,000 are likely to become homeless), and an increase in hard drugs (amphetamines and heroin injections) is or will dramatically challenge the work in streets and the centres. • For successful placement it is important that the employment market and job opportunities keep growing.	• Research and media to alert local authorities, GOs and NGOs to the current level of need, and to implement strategies that can work towards combating issues such as HIV/AIDS among children and drug use • Creating placements for young people whose family situation limits their options

In responding to the problem of exploitative labour, including the creation of alternatives through micro-credit, it is clear that approaches that build the capacity of children build hope. They respond in ways that recognise the resilience of children, and could be summed up in the phrase the Dom Bosco youth agency of the Catholic Church takes as its motto: *"It is better to light a candle than curse the darkness"*. Root causes such as poverty will always need to be addressed, but action that increases livelihoods for children, youth and families reduces the debilitating effect of poverty and its contribution to child abuse and neglect.

Cambodia: Children's clubs, giving children a voice in their own development

A Children's Club outdoor activity

Photo: World Vision Cambodia

"Children are the bamboo shoots who replace the bamboo stalks."

— *traditional Khmer saying*

"Young people's involvement in teams, groups, clubs, committees, NGOs, Boards, unions and other types of associations, both with and without adults, can strengthen civil society in the community." [14]

Background

Promoting a safer world for children is often complex. Development agencies need to be able to work in ways that not only address issues placing children at risk but also account for the methods used. How to promote change without imposing change? How best to sustain activities that reduce the risks children face in the community? What practices do not need extensive technical knowledge or advanced English language skills to learn and apply? What approaches can gain support from children and community members in ways that strengthen partnership

and ownership? Failure to address these important questions limits the effectiveness of interventions.

One practice that has emerged through this study, which can go some way to providing answers to these questions, is the inclusion of planned avenues for child participation at village level. This approach complements broader development efforts aiming to improve livelihoods. It also can be shown to influence community attitudes so as to decrease the risks children encounter. Attitudes are linked to behaviour: as community attitudes change, more options become available, and actions will result that can reduce incidence of abuse. [15]

Practice that raises the profile and priority of children's issues is in keeping with central observations of World Vision's CAN study. [16] *"A conceptual framework based on child and youth participation"* was a key recommendation, because children were shown to have potential and the desire to contribute to programs addressing social issues affecting them.

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[14] Hart, R, *Children's Participation: The theory and practice of involving young citizens in community development and environmental care*, 1996

[15] *The Nexus of Vulnerability: Prevention of trafficking of women and children and HIV/AIDS in South Asia*, UNDP, 1999

[16] Dorning, K, *Crying Out*, World Vision International, 2002

Cambodia

To further understand how children's involvement can impact on the quality of life experienced by children, primary research was undertaken in Cambodia where child participation is part of a strategy to prevent child abuse or neglect. (Tools and techniques used are discussed with regard to Cambodia and other countries covered in this study. Practical applications of child participatory approaches linked to broader development activity are explored in the Sri Lanka and the Philippines chapters.)

Child protection concerns identified

Support for increased child participation was prompted by research into child trafficking by World Vision and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in 1998, which identified the following risk factors:

1. An older sister, relative or friend is already involved in prostitution.

2. The parents of the girl are separated, divorced or have remarried.

3. One or both parents are dead and the girl is living with relatives or friends.

4. The family is dependent on casual work, in debt, or in extreme poverty.

5. The girl is of suitable age for the sex industry.

6. The girl is mentally weak.

7. There is community indifference or powerlessness over the presence of trafficking or prostitution that has involved children.

An integrated approach

Children's/youth clubs and associations were developed in Cambodia in 1999 by World Vision in partnership with Village Development Committees, local schools and children. Once the structure was established, other links have been made with the Children Assistance for Mobilisation and Participation group (CAMP), Project Against Domestic Violence (PADV), and the human

rights group LICADHO. A safe meeting place for children through clubs is a feature of work in 11 villages with a combined population of 29,760, in two provinces. At the time of writing, there are 11 clubs with 1,574 club members.

The clubs' strategy has addressed risk factors 3, 5, 6 and 7, while income generation in broader development activity has addressed point 4. The objectives of the establishment of children's/youth clubs are:

• to promote awareness of child rights and child protection issues in the community

• to help children progress in study, play, discussion, teaching each other, and releasing their personal stress

• to assist children to help themselves and each other

• to improve knowledge of the Khmer culture, tradition, and civilised behaviour through children's/youth activities

• to build community people's understanding about the importance and value of children through the club activities

• to encourage and give opportunity for children to be a role model and resource in the village and community, and

• to give opportunity for children to participate and speak out about their concerns and issues, in public and at the local/national level.

Methods used reflect a belief that children are not passive recipients of abuse in need of protection, but have potential to be actively involved in strengthening their own development.[17]

> *"Participation builds life skills and enables selfprotection… Young people who have things just happen to them without having the opportunity to defend themselves or shape outcomes are more likely to become passive and fatalistic. But adole-scents who are encouraged to express their opinions and feelings, to be assertive and to stand up for themselves will be more likely to have higher self-esteem and move from a position of confidence."* [18]

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[17] *Child Development Study Pack*, Tear Fund, 1999

[18] Hart, R, *Children's Participation: The theory and practice of involving young citizens in community development and environmental care*, 1996

Impact of the projects

The research question for assessing the projects' impact was:

"In what ways have activities that promote child participation, link with schools and include a focus on child rights demonstrably improved the quality of life of children in selected communities and reduced harmful or exploitative practices towards children?"

Two urban and two rural sites were selected to represent distinct environments where risks to children vary. World Vision has been active in each location for several years.
Two have established child participation approaches that have promoted child rights in the community. There are plans for extension of these activities to other communities.

For the purpose of the research the communities were coded:

A. Urban community where there are child rights activities linked to a children's club as part of a community development program
B. Urban community with no child rights activity or children's club
C. Rural community where there are child rights activities linked to a children's club as part of a community development program
D. Rural community where there is a development program and a children's club has recently been started, but no child rights activities.

Information was gathered from three sources to build a picture of children's place in the community:

1. A **household survey** gained input from 12 female heads of household in each of the four locations identified through random selection.

Children participating in group work on prevention of child exploitation, Siem Reap

Photo: Laurence Gray

2. A **Participatory Rural Appraisal** (PRA) gathered the views of 377 children aged between 9 and 16, of whom 48% were male and 52% female. In areas where child rights activities or children's clubs operate, 53% of survey responses were from club members and 47% from non-club participants.
This was in order to reduce possible bias and to gain a perspective on how information had influenced attitudes of other children in the community.

Cambodia

Responses were gained through both group discussion (25 group discussions involving 177 children), and individual interviews with 127 children to reduce the possible bias in group discussions where one member may dominate.

3. A **Community leaders survey** was undertaken with members of the Village Development Committee in each location. Twelve committee members are elected from the community, each with a designated area of concern such as education or health for the village. They form a recognised authority, elect a village leader from their group, and link with the next levels of government on matters of development and order.

Each survey method involved an independent facilitator, recorder and an observer from the Cambodian Centre for Advanced Study working in partnership with World Vision.

The research showed that:

- Children in communities where child rights or child-led activities were part of the program showed greater independence and awareness of options than children where such activities were not part of the program.

- Equal access to school for girls is a concept which receives greater support in areas where children's clubs/child rights have been promoted than in communities where this has not been the case.

- Children in a village where a club operates are more likely to identify themselves as having a role in caring for younger siblings than where there are no children's clubs.

- Child rights promotion through clubs reduces support for the practice of children working at a young age to assist family income.

- Children assume increasing leadership in activities that promote their ownership of the activity and their independence.

- Children's belief that they can work

together is significantly encouraged when they have opportunity to do so with the support of the community.

- Child-focused activities promote greater awareness of risks and of the importance of speaking out about abuse.

- Communities where there are child rights activities have greater awareness of the issue of abuse, and some groups had taken action on problems children face.

- Clubs offer structure for children to discuss, meet others with similar concerns, and present their issues to the community.

- The existence of clubs does not stop the occurrence of child abuse or neglect in a community, but they are a first stage towards giving children greater resources to plan and lobby. The presence of safe gathering places for children (clubs) also challenges the existing child protection concerns.

- Child participation in structured activities informs and influences community leaders to give greater attention to issues placing children at risk.

- Community leaders are more aware of avenues for local response if there is an issue of child abuse in their village.

- Child participation promotes an attitude among community leaders that not only considers the potential of children but also expresses concern on barriers they encounter within the community. This is significant, as it is inside their area of control; their focus is more "what can *we* do", whereas in community (D) the attitude expressed was more externally focused on what *others* would do.

- Child participation activities and structure at village level has (to paraphrase Covey's [19] terms) increased children's area of concern, which is an important step in increasing their sphere of influence.

- Planned activities give community leaders greater appreciation of the link between issues of risk and the law.

[19] Covey, S R, *The 7 Habits of Highly-Effective People*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1990

- Positive group activities involving children are seen as a counter to negative associations such as street gangs.

Useful approaches to building child participation

- Supporting children to work with their community leaders to define avenues for action that build on the increasing concerns prompted by child participation

- Children's clubs or associations developing strategies with community leaders on responses to domestic violence

- Encouraging ideas and activities to emerge from children themselves, as their confidence and knowledge increase; this can be assisted by encouraging critical reflection on activities or a project's outcome

- Greater linkages made between income-generating activities in poorer areas and approaches to build child protection through participation. Children need to have opportunity to develop vocational skills; part of this process is exposure to different job roles and opportunities. Projects play a role in education on what is appropriate work, and increase links between children and local employers.

- Community leaders involved in planning and supporting child participation strategies to widen their impact on the community

- Information-sharing between children and clubs, which can stimulate further ideas and options; in this way, children learn from each other and gain capacity in leadership

- Projects working with children including a greater focus on communication and facilitation skills to assist youth leaders to develop capacities to take increasing ownership of activities

- Increased development of materials to promote learning or follow-up activities through children's networks

- NGOs nurturing and highlighting local role

models in-community to encourage children.

Barriers to child participation

- Suspicion from community leaders or family as to the purpose of promoting opportunities for children to organise themselves

- Fear from families and leaders that children would not respect their elders if they learned about rights and became less dependent on them (respect for people older than oneself is a strong value in Cambodia). Children are at risk through being denied the right to have their opinions heard, as the 2001 UNICEF study *Speaking Out* showed, with only 17% of children responding "Yes, in my community my opinion and friends' opinions matter", compared to 43% in Indonesia and 73% in the Philippines. [20]

   This barrier has been addressed through structuring projects to explore social values starting with respect for others and oneself. Activities lead to children becoming more, not less, responsible. The club idea has won support in villages where it operates.

- Conflicting demands on children, especially in families who were very poor, meant that some children's level of accessing the program was lower than hoped as they were needed to look after cows or perform other roles linked to the economic fortune of the family.

- Conflicting priorities within the area, such as harvest time, examinations, or natural events such as flood and drought (both of which occurred in 2002).

Community participation leading to community action

Children's networks and community mobilising are significant resources in shifting attitudes and increasing local response on child protection. The CAN study [21] noted the need for policies and programs that support

[20] UNICEF, *Speaking Out: Voices of Children and Adolescents in East Asia and the Pacific: A regional opinion survey*, Keen Publishing, Bangkok, 2001

[21] Dorning K, *Crying Out*, World Vision International, 2002

Cambodia

LICADHO uses a variety of visual formats to communicate simple messages to communities, including (clockwise from top): Symbols illustrating forms and impacts of child work vs. labour; photos of dramatised situations; case studies of worst forms; portraits of real-life working children; VCD video clips, and illustrated leaflets.

families and build community. Two approaches in Cambodia that deserve a mention here are from UNICEF's Community-based Social Protection Initiative and the Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defence of Human Rights (LICADHO)'s approach to protecting children from exploitative labour.

UNICEF's approach starts from the position that the family is the first line of defence for children. Volunteers from communities are trained as "social helpers" to monitor any incident of child trafficking or sexual exploitation. Social helper network meetings are regularly held with authorities

to pass on information. Action is then taken against offenders. Attention to this issue gives a strong child protection message in villages targeted. [22]

LICADHO, with support from the ILO, has worked with children's associations and community groups to inform and mobilise action on exploitative forms of labour. An information kit [23] has been used by groups of trained volunteers supported by LICADHO to assist in the identification of exploitative or hazardous labour. It depicts a range of common childhood activities mixed in with four of the worst forms of child labour (sexual, hazardous, illegal and forced).

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[22] Fallon & Tzannotos, 1998

[23] The LICADHO kit is reproduced in an online "Toolkit" appendix to Children at Risk, at http://www.children.campaign.org.

Lessons learned by LICADHO's Child Rights Department in developing printed materials for use by children and adults in peer education addressing worst forms of child labour

1. Highly visual materials

   a. Communicating through creative and colourful imagery makes topics more interesting and accessible by people of all ages and literacy levels.

   b. Drawings can illustrate abstract or sensitive topics and can be serious or playful, while photographs (particularly of case studies) illustrate the reality of the issues.

   c. Large formats of at least A3 size create more interest and allow presentations to medium-sized groups in communities or even classrooms.

2. Limited, easy-to-understand text

   a. Limiting text to short phrases using everyday language encourages readers with low interest or literacy skills to access the materials.

   b. Limiting text also allows for quicker presentations by educators and leaves room for discussion and verbal clarification.

3. Short, focused lessons

   a. Long peer education sessions risk losing participants who are busy or have little interest in the topic; 1–2 hours is appropriate depending on the number of activities or methods used.

   b. Presenting more than one topic per session risks overloading participants with more information than they can remember; it is better to focus on one topic.

4. Combined teaching methods

   a. Presenting the same topic in a variety of ways increases understanding and retention.

   b. Review and reinforce the same topics covered in the teaching aids by supplementing them with short skits, role plays, learning games and group discussions as appropriate

5. Create excitement with a final quiz with prizes

   a. Announce a short question-and-answer competition with prizes at the end, to create excitement and motivate participants to pay attention to presentation

   b. Prizes can be t-shirts, posters, balloons, etc. with messages that relate to the issue presented, and act as "souvenirs" to remind participants of the topic later.

6. Provide take-home handouts and related materials

   a. Distribute flyers, stickers, and other types of handouts at the end of a session, so participants have something to take home to review and remind of the topic

7. Train and support peer education

   a. Support educators in the process of using materials through field demonstrations and reflection/evaluation to improve quality and impact of presentations

Cambodia

Families are taught to distinguish between the types of work through discussion and use of video materials. Key people are trained to identify where any of these forms of child labour is occurring in villages; linkages are made with the authorities, and reporting involves children, parents and officials. Community members who are involved in training contribute to its quality through discussion and requests for training or assistance in similar areas.

Seven networks covering 60,000 people have been established. Increased awareness has been evident among the villagers, officials and volunteers who participate, and cases have emerged. One example is of three girls in debt bondage to a distant cousin for $150 their parents had borrowed. The money was for medical assistance, which was unsuccessful, and the parents died leaving the three young girls with the relative. He ran a brick factory and the children were put to work making bricks. They had been there for two years by the time they came to the attention of a villager who had been trained in identifying and reporting incidents of child labour. The village helper was able to get others involved in the case so that the children were freed from their debt, and able to move to live with another relative and resume a normal life.

The authorities have not charged the man, but motivating community members to speak out on issues of child protection, equipped with a background in what the law provides, is a significant achievement. It assists a community to take responsibility for the well-being of its children.

Cambodia: Promoting legal protection for sexually exploited and trafficked children

Police interviewing girls rescued from exploitation

Photo: World Vision Cambodia

"Where the cat has lost its teeth the mice have no fear."

– traditional saying

Background

Child protection concerns identified

"Sexual exploitation and trafficking of children remains an important social problem in Cambodia and the Asia region. Despite many efforts in the social sector aimed at prevention and services for the victims, their impact has remained limited. Very few offenders, whether they be traffickers, brothel owners or customers, are punished, and without deterrence there is little decrease in exploitation. Efforts in the social sector will remain fruitless without improved law enforcement." [24]

The First World Congress Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, held in Stockholm in August 1996, provided the platform to gain needed political support for external groups to contribute to real changes in rule of law in sovereign countries. In Cambodia, any programmatic response needed to be integrated with Cambodia's international, regional and local commitments to increased rule of law.

A National Five-Year Plan was conceived in line with the Stockholm Agenda for Action and the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC). The Plan was adopted by the Council of Ministers on 17 March 2000 in order to:

- review all laws related to children's issues
- prevent the trafficking and sexual exploitation of children
- improve the legal support system for victims

- improve competence of police and the courts
- develop national and local monitoring systems, and
- improve international cooperation to combat trafficking.

A *Law on Suppression of the Kidnapping, Trafficking and Exploitation of Human Persons* had been adopted on 23 January 1996. Implementation, however, was lagging, as the police and judiciary were not being trained in ways to use this new tool.

An integrated approach

Outcome-focused research was emphasised in the CAN study. [25] Cooperative strategies between the voluntary sector and government often co-exist with advocacy to promote change, as Fisher has highlighted. [26] Initial research by World Vision and the Ministry of the Interior into barriers facing legal protection of children from sexual exploitation led to a commitment by UNICEF, the International Organization for Migration, Save the Children Norway, the United Nations Cambodia Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and World Vision to collaborate on project design to influence government policy and practice.

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[24] Boonpata & Kane, ILO, 2001

[25] Dorning, K, *Crying Out*, World Vision International, 2002

[26] Fisher, J, 1998

Cambodia

The Law Enforcement Against Sexual Exploitation of Children (LEASEC) project was launched in April 2000 with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding.

The overall goal of this project, now in its fourth year, has been to improve the capabilities of police, judges and prosecutors to investigate cases of sexual exploitation of children, including rescue of victims, development of referral systems, arrest of offenders and initiation of court proceedings.

Partners in this process

The Ministry of the Interior has implemented the LEASEC project with technical and financial assistance from all five partners named above. The project has three main strategies:

1. To assist the Ministry of the Interior to develop Police Operating Procedures and Practices, in order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Royal Cambodian Police in investigation of cases of child sexual exploitation, including the rescue of victims, use of referral services, arresting offenders and initiating court proceedings.

2. To sensitise police officers in 13 provinces and municipalities to the issue of sexual exploitation, including psycho-social aspects of the problem, through dissemination of relevant legislation, police operating procedures, and the development of basic investigation skills.

3. To provide in-depth training to a limited number of police officers, as well as two prosecutors and two investigating judges from Phnom Penh, in techniques for the investigation of sexual exploitation and abuse. Training is applied with a 24-hour Police telephone hotline for cases to be reported from the public.

The methodology is one of training of trainers, development of training and development of materials to sensitise police and courts to the issue of child sexual exploitation. The materials are multi-disciplinary and use various approaches. In order to gain police support, a two-day briefing was conducted for all Provincial and Municipal Commissioners of Police, as well as Deputy Commissioners for the Judicial Police Branch and for the Scientific and Technical Branch. An Investigations Team established in Phnom Penh provides support for their day-to-day work as well as on-the-job training.

Technical assistance, through the services of one International Police expert, one short-term consultant on Police Operating Procedures, and one short-term Training Consultant, is provided along with material support.

Impact of the project

The LEASEC project was one of 11 examples of "good practice" in the Asia region to be highlighted in an Education and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) report [27] in preparation for the Second World Congress in December 2001, with the comment: *It advances the objectives of numerous international agreements and declarations…and meets an urgent need for improved police response to child sexual exploitation*". Coordination of resources and expertise among donor agencies and close collaboration with relevant government Ministries have added to the efficiency of this response.

During the first phase of the project, from April 2000 to March 2002, several materials were developed: Legal and Technical Documents for Investigators, and Training Materials, including a sensitisation video film "The Victim" which was recently broadcast on all Cambodian television channels.

The second task of the project was to conduct training programs, including training of trainers, for a senior Investigation Coordination Team [28] and:

• 20 members of the Investigation Network in Phnom Penh

• 44 Provincial/Municipal Police Commissioners and First Deputy Police Commissioners

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[27] UNICEF/ESCAP, *Asia-Pacific Answers: East Asia and the Pacific Regional Consultation for the Second World Congress Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children*, UNICEF/ESCAP, 2001

[28] The police force has many levels and different areas of operational responsibility. The project has emphasised coordination between the different groups. The Investigation Coordination Team consists of more senior police who endorse and support the actual investigations carried out by a small Investigations Team of 3–5 officers. The Investigation Network (mentioned in the following bullet point) liaises between members of these groups.

- 28 Provincial/Municipal Deputy Commissioners in charge of Judicial Police
- 446 middle management–level provincial and district police officers from 13 provinces/ municipalities (two one-week workshops six months apart)
- on-the-job training for two weeks for two district police officers selected from each of the 13 provincial/municipal capitals
- 134 additional [29] female police officers from all the provinces and municipalities, and
- sensitisation training for Tourism Police and Heritage Police.

The project has been publicly commended or acknowledged by senior police and government representatives:

"After two years of the Project's activity, we can be optimistic, because even though the phenomenon of exploitation and trafficking of children has not disappeared but increased, a significant progress has been made in the Law Enforcement area."

– His Excellency Prum Sokha, Secretary of State

"There is no doubt that the Project has a clear impact on the police work. The number of rescues and arrests has markedly increased, compared to previous years. The following results reflect cases handled by police officers trained under this project:

From 15 October 2000 to 31 August 2002 (22.5 months), 602 cases were reported – 376 to the hotline. A total of 284 cases were investigated (27 cases per month), out of which, 107 were in cooperation between the MoI specialised Units and the Phnom Penh Police, 170 with provincial Police, and 7 with Interpol. As of 31 August 2002, 215 cases had been cleared (offenders identified and prosecuted).

A total of 626 victims were rescued: 126 below 15 years of age (109 girls, 17 boys); 172 between 15 and 18 years of age (all girls); and 328, 18 years old and above (all girls). 242 victims went back with their families, 316 were referred to NGO social services and 68 were

referred to government social services. 237 offenders have been arrested: 38 for child sexual exploitation, 53 for human trafficking, 130 for rape, and 16 for debauchery or child pornography. Two offenders have been sentenced in their country of origin.

From 15 October 2000 to 31 August 2002, the 24-hour hotline received a total of 1506 calls, out of which 376 were relevant cases.

- *47% of the victims rescued are less than 18 years old*

- *The number of investigations on cases of rape has sharply increased in 2002, as well as the number of minors rescued from sexual exploitation*

- *The performance of the investigators has been improving*

- *Among 602 cases reported only 284 are investigated because the victims withdraw many complaints."*

– His excellency Hok Lundy, General Commisioner of the National Police of Cambodia

Useful approaches to strengthening legal protection of children

1. Taking the opportunity of regional and international commitments by the government to press for changes in child protection at local level

2. Working in partnership has allowed different agencies to work in their areas of strength and to complement each other. It has also allowed NGOs and International Organisations to speak with a common voice on program responses required. This is particularly significant because a large Government ministry such as Interior has multiple initiatives operating at a given time in partnership with a range of groups to strengthen good governance. Coordination and cooperation assists efficiency and effectiveness in promoting change for increased child protection. [30]

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[29] Senior female police include the Coordinator of the Anti–Human Trafficking Unit, where this capacity-building project is based in the Ministry of the Interior.

[30] Regional Working Group on Child Labour, 1999

3. The project was based on research conducted in partnership with the police themselves, by a former policeman, to better understand barriers they face. In this way it was able to identify specific needs, going beyond general concern. Involvement of the police also respected their dignity and the value of their input, and laid the groundwork for cooperation on implementation.

4. High-quality training materials, which were reviewed by the police themselves and independently by an external police trainer, have now become part of the police training curriculum. Quality and delivery are key, as the police have responded to methods that "engage" rather than "lecture".

"I would like to insist on the fact that before the opening of the Project, only a very few cases of sexual offences against children were reported and investigated each year. These encouraging figures are the result of training and advice given to the police officers, close cooperation with other Ministries involved, as well as International Organisations and NGOs on child protection."

– His Excellency Hok Lundy, General Commissioner of the National Police of Cambodia

5. Follow-up and application has been strengthened with the 24-hour hotline, which allows the use of training to be monitored in reference to actual cases. Monitoring systems have contributed to police tracking of casework, and have earned support as a useful tool. Regular meetings with donors around quarterly monitoring reports assists in maintaining the focus of the project.

6. Endorsement by the Deputy Prime Minister and senior officials assisted in strengthening the responsiveness of provincial officials to address local child protection concerns.

Barriers

The LEASEC project has promoted greater response to child protection. Change has been seen in the increased numbers of cases investigated and children freed. Nevertheless,

- Challenges emerge where the police are poorly paid and can be bribed. Investigations are compromised when another section of the police is complicit in illegal activities. The trade in human trafficking and prostitution pays well. Offenders are able to intimidate or bribe witnesses, as there is no system of witness protection.

- Members of Cambodia's judiciary had opportunity to participate in the program. Unfortunately this has not been possible to a large extent. The judicial system is being rebuilt following Cambodia's period of conflict and instability; there are many initiatives underway and the LEASEC project is competing with other areas for attention. This context, combined with an at times tense relationship between the police and the judiciary, has on occasion been a barrier to the potential for cooperation between these two arms of legal redress for Cambodia's children.

- Prosecutions have proven difficult. Courts fail to keep offenders in jail, corruption is high and there is a low level of trust between the courts and the police.

- The project, while successful, has struggled for sufficient resources even though it currently has four agencies supporting it. Workloads of the one technical adviser and the team of trainers are high, leaving them with little room to respond to additional tasks – such as those that arise when high-profile cases involving foreigners have emerged.

- Limited resources have also reduced the project's capacity to contribute from its experience to the development of regional initiatives to address cross-border trafficking.

Indonesia
Education, a tool for strengthening child protection

"If you want to build a hut, first collect the reeds."

— traditional saying

" 'Education is that which liberates' is as true today as it was before... Liberation means freedom from all manner of servitude [oppression] even in the present life."

— M. K. Gandhi

Background

Indonesia, in 2002, continued to be challenged by economic, social and political crises with no sustainable resolutions yet in sight. Indonesia's population in 2000 was estimated at 203 million, and the population growth rate at 1.35%, or about three million new inhabitants per year. The urban population growth is much higher, at 4% per year. With urban dwellers comprising some 41% of the total population, this means that Indonesia's already strained cities are having to provide housing and social services each year to an additional 3.3 million people.

Data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) in Indonesia show that in August 1999, some 37.5 million people (18.2% of the population) were living below the national poverty line. But national averages are misleading. Data disaggregated by province show much higher rates: 54.8 % in Irian Jaya, the poorest province; 46.7% in Nusa Tenggara Timur; and 46.1% in Maluku.

Child protection concerns identified

Conflict and violence across the archipelago has harmed, traumatised, and displaced children, women and men on a massive scale. The vast majority of internally displaced

As part of the Education Safety Net initiative, children are encouraged to discuss and present among themselves issues and problems that are important to them.

Photo: Ferry Doringin/World Vision

persons (IDPs) in Indonesia are women and children. The number of IDPs grew from less than 350,000 in August 1999 to more than 1.3 million in September 2001, almost quadrupling in the space of two years. According to the BPS: [1]

- In the decade 1985–95, two million children lost their lives due to conflict.

- During this decade, between four and five million children were disabled or maimed by conflict while two million were separated from their parents.

- Children under 18 have been actively involved in armed conflict, particularly in the island of Maluku.

- In 1999, the Government estimated the number of working children to be 2.3 million. This has been seen as an underestimate by NGOs, as the study only covered the formal sector work of children over the age of 10.

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[1] *2000 Statistical Year Book of Indonesia*, BPS (Central Bureau of Statistics), Jakarta, 2001. Other data on this page is also sourced from BPS.

Indonesia

- The BPS also estimated that 23% of domestic workers in all of Indonesia are aged between 10 and 18.
- A census in 1999 found that 30% of girls and young women aged 10–24 in Java, West Sumatra and East Kalimantan had a first marriage at age 16 or younger.

Against this complex background, agencies work to promote child protection in practice. The need for increased access to quality education emerged many times in the course of this Indonesia study. Communities and families express this as a priority for their children. It is seen as bringing benefit in the immediate and longer term, and as a resource against factors such as economic downturn or political or ethnic tension. Children themselves want to build their options through education.

The Government of Indonesia has committed itself to implementing the UN *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC), which it ratified on 25 August 1990. A National CRC Coordinating Agency within the Ministry for People's Welfare is responsible for coordinating the implementation. [2] In addition, the National Government under the current President has been encouraging Provincial governments to develop social protection policies, which will include child protection issues.

Access to education

Each year, there are about a million Indonesian children aged 7–12 years not enrolled in primary school. Of those who do enrol, nearly one million drop out before completing the primary cycle. The proportion of Indonesian children entering first grade of primary school who eventually reached grade 5 was about 83% in 2000. In the age group 13–15 years, some six million children never enrol in junior secondary school – the three additional years required for compulsory basic education. Of those that do, some 200,000 drop out before completing.

This means that there are at least seven million children in the age group 7–15 years who are either out of school, or have never been to school. These children come mostly from poorer groups, and allowing them to drop out means a perpetuation of the poverty cycle, as well as acceptance of system inefficiency.

These are also the children who are more vulnerable to child labour and exploitation. One report estimates a third of all registered and unregistered commercial sex workers (between 40,000 and 70,000) in Indonesia to be under 18 years old. A 1999 survey by the Department of Social Affairs registered about 40,000 street children in 12 major cities across Indonesia. Most of these children go home to their families, but some 4–7% are homeless and actually live on the streets, vulnerable to abuse, disease and exploitation.

Government spending on education listed for 1997 is only 1.4 % of GDP. In 2000 (the most recent figures available), the estimated enrolment rate for primary education is 95%. This drops to 47% for secondary school. [3]

An integrated approach

One area of child protection practice common to Government, United Nations Agencies and World Vision strategies in Indonesia is that of promoting access to education, and school retention, for children at risk. Part of this strategy is the scaling-up of successful practice. Collaboration between the Ministry of Education, two Universities and World Vision has led to the development of a four-year program that is addressing the issue of access, retention and capacity, as well as ensuring that child rights are further integrated into teaching practice.

As World Vision's child abuse and neglect (CAN) study [4] emphasised, education has a key role not only in increasing the life options of the child, but also in involving parents more fully in the development of their

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[2] Source: *Indonesia Country Profile*, update, UNICEF, February 2002

[3] Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS), 2001

[4] Dorning, K, *Crying Out: Children and communities speak on abuse and neglect*, World Vision International, 2002 (http://www.wvi.org/imagine/can.htm)

children. It highlighted that programs require commitment on the part of government, and a fundamental shift in thinking that places positive outcomes for children as a central tenet in social and economic policy. This approach in Indonesia was developed in response to reported incidents of physical abuse of children by teachers, as well as expressed concerns about teachers' capacity, and student absenteeism.

The Education Safety Net program

World Vision Indonesia, with the endorsement of the Ministry of Education and in collaboration with two Universities, commenced the five-year Education Safety Net (ESN) program in October 1999 in poor and marginalised communities in the greater metropolitan area of Jakarta, Indonesia's capital. The goal of this project is to ensure that the children at risk will complete secondary school and not be forced by family financial pressure to earn income for the family on the streets. The project's three objectives are:

- **Objective 1:** To ensure that vulnerable students are kept in school and improve their capacity through access to quality education
- **Objective 2:** To improve parents' awareness of the rights of children
- **Objective 3:** To strengthen the capacity of schools through curriculum and teacher training in integrating child rights into teaching methods.

Schools where ESN has been applied are recognised as "safe schools" by the Ministry of Education. ESN has been used at these schools to build the capacity of teachers, involve parents, and engage children in ways that promote child rights leading to greater student safety.

Children, teachers and parents have been involved in surveys of attitudes towards education conducted through the ESN program, which highlighted that:

- Knowledge and information is becoming the "most valued capital".
- Education is seen as one of the most critical determinants for improved performance in other development indicators.
- The education system and the school student are often the most effective agents of change in the community.
- The role of the teacher is vital to education.

Partners in this process

The ESN involves a partnership between World Vision, the Administration Faculty of Atmajaya University (Education Development Project); Prima Daya (Centre of Study and Training on Quality of Human Resources Development); and the Public University of Jakarta (Social Science Faculty, and Mathematics and Natural Science Faculty).

The approach of linking with the mainstream education system is possible because it has the support of the Ministry of Education, who may want to replicate this elsewhere. The entry point was research into reports of excessive discipline being used in classrooms by teachers who were using their authority inappropriately. The project has drawn on both the Government of Indonesia's commitment to the CRC, and a situation where child rights were being compromised by employees of a public agency.

As a follow-up to integrating child rights into the curriculum through teachers being trained to teach on child rights, parents themselves are being educated about child rights. The project extended its target group to include parents, as the result of interest expressed by parents and of recognition that parents need assistance to understand child rights concepts their children are receiving.

Indonesia

For Children's Day in July 2002, World Vision conducted a sport and art competition for children involved in the Education Safety Net program.

Photo: Ferry Doringin/World Vision

Impact of the project

- Up until June 2002, World Vision's ESN team has distributed scholarships to 10,048 children from 118 primary schools and 46 secondary schools. Each scholarship covers four months' payment for school fees. ESN also distributes uniforms and school supplies.

- Of these 164 schools, 59 are in locations where World Vision Area Development Programs (ADPs) operate.

- The multiple-intervention approach to improving the cost-effectiveness of a country's education system in the best interest of the child has been shown in a UNESCO study to have the most impact when a program contains four elements:

  - learning packages
  - school-based management
  - training, and
  - testing. [5]

Teachers, perhaps obviously, are a key agent for improvement of teaching quality. ESN conducts training for the teachers of grades 1–3 of primary schools and grades 7–9 of secondary school. The training is organised in collaboration with Atmajaya University and the Public University of Jakarta. The Atmajaya team trained teachers in the topics of Child Psychology, "Quantum Teaching", School Management, Teaching Methods in Mathematics and Social Science, and "Brain Gym". Printed manuals were also developed by Atmajaya University with support from World Vision. The World Vision team provided training in topics around the CRC, and the Public University of Jakarta contributed to the module development. The intention is that CRC principles can be viewed as a resource for teachers, linked to their new teaching styles and methodologies.

Staff training is complemented by other measures to strengthen school capacity. Books are distributed to the 44 elementary schools in Kramatjati and Ciracas sub-districts, two under-resourced areas of Jakarta – each package containing an encyclopaedia set, and short story books. To support this, ESN has conducted two-day training for librarians of these schools in management and promotion of the new books to children and teachers. The training involved a speaker from the National Education Department (part of the Ministry of Education), to promote ownership from schools.

[5] Schiefelbein, E, Wolff, L & Schiefelbein, P, "Cost-effectiveness of primary education policies in Latin America: A survey of expert opinion", *Bulletin* 49, UNESCO (OREALC), Santiago (Chile), August 1999. This research was supported by the World Bank.

Teacher training: Grades 1, 2 & 3 primary school teachers

The Government gives approval for teacher training. The ESN Team has conducted training for 128 teachers who attended from 63 primary schools. Two popular training modules, both of which aim to improve children's participation in the educational process, and to enable them to develop life skills, were "Brain Gym" and "Quantum Teaching". Multi-level approaches such as these result in change both in the classroom and in the family.

- Brain Gym® is promoted as "a program of physical activities that enhance learning ability". [6]
- Quantum Teaching is a promoted as a synthesis of educational methodologies in which "teachers learn strategies that help their students learn more effectively while creating a classroom environment that catches students' attention." [7]

Brain Gym (BG)	Quantum Teaching (QT)

• Brain Gym is a series of simple activities that have been found to be effective in improving the health of body, mind and spirit.
• Based on research by Roger Sperry, a psycho-biologist who received a Nobel Prize in 1981 for his discoveries concerning the functional specialisation of the cerebral hemispheres.
• Through BG activities, Sperry succeeded in making learning more engaging to children who had not been responding to standard techniques. Hyperactive children are one group to benefit from this approach. As it developed, BG came to be applied to all ages, from children under-five through to the elderly.
	• QT is a teaching model that originates in the USA. In QT, the teacher is professional, valuable, effective and successful.
	• Teachers are asked to create an unforgettable learning process for students and to organise the students to experience success. The way of teaching in class is changed so as to:
	  - raise students' interest and participation
	  - improve their understanding
	  - optimise their ability
	• The demonstration of QT is very clear and easily understood.

• BG works by optimising and harmonising right and left brain function in the following areas:
Reading skills – three BG motions (steps)
Concentration – six BG motions
• BG is most effective if children practise it every morning before class begins, or at times when they find it difficult to concentrate.
	• Basic elements of QT are:
	  - Building trust to engage with the students through good communication
	  - Bringing the teacher's world to students – teacher shares his/her understanding about a topic and invites students to contribute.
	  - Learning involves mind, feelings and body language - teacher leads, directs and eases students' way to wider awareness and knowledge.

• The BG approach makes learning activities easier by both supporting the thinking and coordination functions, and sharpening specific skills.
• Practice of BG can help students be more relaxed and achieve greater concentration.
• BG can sharpen intelligence and assist in appropriate emotional expression.
• BG can also help avoid negative attitudes, because the physical movement assists in balancing of right and left brain hemispheres. This promotes greater calmness in children who are able to think longer before taking a course of action, in this way reducing impulsive unsettling acts.
	• QT aims
	- To create success through context
	Create friendly conditions…
	  1. Strengthening teacher's commitment
	  2. Creating understanding and sympathy
	  3. Creating happiness
	  4. Taking risks
	  5. A sense of belonging with each other
	  6. Showing a mastering attitude
	Create a strong base…
	  1. Setting up common goals
	  2. Setting up common commitment
	  3. Teacher must be confident
	  4. Setting up policy, procedures and roles together with students
	  5. Teacher viewed as students' partner
	Create a supportive environment…
	  1. Tools
	  2. Class setting (tables, chairs, etc)
	  3. Music
	- To create success through content
	Create a good presentation…
	  1. Show confidence, positiveness, flexibility, humour, enthusiasm, etc.
	  2. Show good communication: focus, impression, be specific, effective, inclusive
	Create a flexible facility…
	  1. KEY principles: know it, explain it, get it and give feedback
	  2. Be a successful facilitator
	  3. Understand the audience (students)
	  4. Create discussion strategy
	Create learning skills…
	  1. Create skills that support students to learn
	  2. Use learning style: visual, audio, kinaesthetic
	  3. Conducive learning condition: sit up, lean forward, ask questions, nod your head, and talk to your teacher.

Source: Adapted from World Vision Indonesia's modules of Brain Gym and Quantum Teaching

[6] According to the Brain Gym website, Brain Gym® uses some exercises that give "a wake-up call to the brain". Movement of course is directly related to our brain structure. The study of hemispheric differences that began with the research of Dr. Roger Sperry who performed the first operation of severing the corpus collosum in a brain-injured soldier, revealed that the hemispheres are connected to the opposite side of our bodies. For example, if you wiggle your right little finger it is your left brain that is sending the signals and vice versa. Understanding the complexities of how the body and mind are interrelated has spawned hundreds of training organisations who specialise in one or another aspect of kinesiological research. Hand/eye coordination exercises are a way to involve the body and movement to help address many problems due to inefficient eye movement habits while reading. Brain Gym® consists of 26 easy and enjoyable targeted activities that bring about rapid and often dramatic improvements in concentration, memory, reading, writing, organising, listening, physical coordination, and more. Brain Gym has developed similar programmes as a result of research into dyslexia. Further research is detailed in an article by Dr. Jochen Donczik entitled "Brain Exercises Improves Reading and Memory" on http://www.braingym.org.

[7] The website states: "Quantum Teaching is a proven synthesis of educational methodologies using the best of accelerated learning, brain research, multiple intelligences, educational neuro-linguistic programming and learning styles. What makes this program unique is that it makes the bridge from the research to the classroom practice for the teachers." http://www.leeca.org.

Useful approaches to building child participation in education

A Participatory Learning of Action (PLA) exercise was conducted with 216 students of seven primary schools and two secondary schools. It showed that students support the new approach and are interested in the process. Students reported that they respond better to teachers who teach "with a sense of humour", and dislike subjects where the teachers are "cruel".

This feedback from the PLA indicates that it is useful to support schools with training that can improve teaching methods and creativity in teaching. For example, students indicated that they were happier and more engaged in learning when teachers applied the Quantum Teaching method.

The ESN team plans to conduct other creative activities to promote greater satisfaction at school, and to provide advocacy support to address students' issues of concern which may be a barrier to them attending school. It is also planned to conduct a PLA for parents to involve them in solving their children's study problems, some of which were connected with child protection concerns.

Teachers also support the approach, with 69.8% of training participants finding it "very useful". The approaches were linked to introducing discussions on child rights into the classroom. Improvement has been noted in management, understanding of child development, knowledge of theory and practice of child's rights and the CRC, and access to teaching resources.

Parents have been willing to see the school as having input on the needs of their children, problems and how to move towards solutions. These solutions need to consider the distinct roles of children, parents, teachers and government. This approach helps stimulate discussion on a range of action in the interest of the child.

Barriers

- Barriers have been experienced in gaining sufficient support from educational institutions.

- Engagement with educational institutions and policies in the best interests of children has proved testing at times, as issues the ESN program seeks to address cover a wide area. World Vision's expertise has needed to be complemented through partnership, so networking with other NGOs and with universities has been crucial in the development and operation of the program.

- Initial resistance to the inclusion of information on the CRC can be overcome. The project has advocated the application of the CRC in training of teachers in all covered schools. Many people besides direct project beneficiaries now have access to it.

Indonesia: Educating children for peaceful futures

Children such as these, displaced by armed conflict and now living in camps or resettled areas, are marginalised and at risk of exploitation.

Photo: Laurence Gray

"Peace is possible especially if today's adversaries were able to imagine themselves becoming friends and begin acting in ways that will promote such a friendship developing in reality…"

– *Desmond Tutu*

"A great man will destroy his foes, a greater man will make them his friends."

– *traditional saying*

Background

Current or recent armed conflict is a key issue in Indonesia and many other countries that experience ethnic, religious or political violence. Three major recent foci of violent conflict in Indonesia have been the Malukus (including Ambon), where violent outbreaks have persisted; Aceh, where the death toll has mounted; and Poso (Central Sulawesi), which saw a renewed outbreak of violence in late 2001. A new conflict in 2002 was the violent expulsion of Madurese settlers from the predominantly Dayak province of Central Kalimantan.

In addition to the total number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) rising to over 1.3 million, violent conflict involves dysfunction for whole populations. Attempts to aid the participants and victims of conflict to overcome its traumatic effects must go beyond immediate humanitarian action. Engagement on views held by opposing parties is needed, to encourage recognition and acceptance of one another.

Human trafficking has emerged as an issue linked to conflict, the resulting poverty, and poor law enforcement across the nearby border with Malaysia. In West Kalimantan, local authorities have stated that there are only two legal crossing points, however local government has indicated that there are more than 50 illegal border crossing points being used for illegal migration. It is also possible that all crossing points are being used for illegal transactions sending people, labour or prostitution into Malaysia. A task group has been established by local government to develop a strategy addressing the impacts of these problems, including human and drug trafficking, on children.

Indonesia

Child protection concerns identified

The extent to which anxiety, psychosomatic complaints, aggression, behavioural disorders or school failures are linked with the direct or indirect consequences of conflict, is not clearly known. In what way could such problems be addressed? It is clear that educational programs are needed that can offset stress, and simultaneously strengthen the building of peace.

Helping communities torn by (or at risk of) violence to recognise and accept communities that hold different views to their own is critical. [8] This is especially true for children, who can be actively involved in either reconciliation or retribution as old conflicts re-emerge with a new generation of protagonists. For the sake of children, both now and in the future, the cycle of violence must be broken. Education also helps children affected by conflict to envisage, and prepare themselves for, alternative futures.

Children displaced and affected by armed conflict, and now living in camps or resettled areas, are especially marginalised and at risk of exploitation. [9] The existence of IDPs in West Kalimantan is a further legacy of the conflict: the Government's response to violent outbreaks in the last five years has partially involved relocating hundreds of families away from areas of tension to camps either in quieter, less accessible areas, or in the main city closely supervised and surrounded by ethnic groups on the "other side" of the conflict. They are safe in these areas but have few basic services and few options. [10] This has led to other child protection issues.

The community of IDPs is able to subsist, but their quality of life is limited. In terms of education, in Marhaban camp, special provision to accommodate this group was not made through the local government school. There was no school in the camp when it was established four years ago and children did not feel safe to go to the school on offer. Thus, the children's right to education and development was compromised as a result of the conflict. (This does not apply to camps in Pontianak city, where children have access to school and their parents have access to jobs.)

There has been a real danger that the children's minority status would promote a sub-class, and place them at risk of being trafficked and/or involved in hazardous work at a young age. Children have been subject to threats of violence from the children of the local community, for whom the presence of the IDP camp has been a source of tension.

While efforts have been undertaken to address issues of access, a dedicated position to promote government response on child protection is needed for further progress to be made. [11]

In this West Kalimantan IDP community, boys from the age of 13 work in manual jobs. Girls are married at the age of 14–16; family size is reportedly five children. Children themselves have dreams of higher education and of being successful in a range of areas. The older youths (aged 16+) have a more negative view, thinking that their dreams will fail because of the lack of opportunity and money.

In conflict areas across Indonesia, children are not only affected by the conflict, but some are involved directly in fighting. Groups of combatants reportedly recruit children with promises of food or payment. The tasks they are called upon to carry out put them at risk and may involve attacking or intimidating others. One 17-year old stated:

> *"If I knew I was recruited to do this, I would have refused and stayed hungry."* [12]

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[8] One means of raising awareness among faith communities that exclusive behaviours and attitudes invite conflict in their neighbourhoods is "holistic mapping". Adaptable to an inter-faith context, it presents methods and tools to help faith communities understand their role and place as agents of peace in a troubled, conflicted country. As well as mapping geographic, social, cultural, economic and political features of the defined community, it includes a "conflict map" (of the stakeholders, positions and interests in the conflicts) and a "spiritual map" (of relevant and competing spiritualities, values, religious groupings, locations of places of worship, etc.). Narrative mapping puts into words the myths, folklore, stories, and histories that influence the community, while a "divider and connector" map depicts both the community's capacities for causing divisions and capacities for making connections.

[9] Interview with World Vision Indonesia Reconciliation and Peacebuilding Adviser, 2002

[10] Note: the families of the camp are ethnic Madurese (originally from the Island of Madura and strong Muslims. The surrounding area is largely populated by the Dayak people who have both Animist and Christian elements). A few weeks before the author visited the camps, three Madurese men travelled 200 kilometres back to land that had been theirs prior to ethnic fighting to explore possibilities of selling it. They were killed and the message of fear, non-acceptance and danger was returned to the camp instead.

[11] Boonpata & Kane, ILO, 2001.

[12] Source: *Child Soldiers Global Report*, International Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, 2001

An integrated approach

A range of approaches can assist in building a safer world for Indonesia's children. Cooperative, rather than competitive, relationships between agencies is vital, especially those that implement programs with similar approaches – as with World Vision and UNICEF in North Maluku. World Vision and UNICEF plan to conduct a joint in-depth education assessment as part of a planned initiative.

Cooperation is also developing around education projects in North Maluku with Save the Children UK. This agency can offer educational expertise, training and government policy work related to its overall strategy for developing alternative peace-oriented curriculums with the Ministry of Education. World Vision contributes in the areas of community organisation, peace building and trauma support at the community level.

Save the Children places emphasis on linking advocacy to field practice, and has a clearly articulated approach. Partnership between World Vision and Save the Children UK is important in West Kalimantan on issues affecting IDPs and in giving information on child protection to the provincial government. Save the Children also has valuable experience and resources on approaches to peace education. This includes child-to-child (C2C) modules involving children from different ethnic groups discussing issues on child rights themes.

Partners in this process

In West Kalimantan, Save the Children and World Vision have worked together in establishing an NGO coalition, including local NGOs, with the main objective of establishing a forum where children's issues and common concerns can be addressed and where mutual acceptance can be promoted. This coalition has been acknowledged by local government.

In a separate program in West Kalimantan, Save the Children brings children from different ethnic and religious backgrounds together to present a radio program for children by children. Children are able to get several free hours of airtime a week. This is broadcast in the capital (Pontianak) and taped for use in other areas, with a total coverage of over 1 million people. There are plans to extend on this model as it gives an avenue to promote children's right to speak on issues that affect them, and to influence community public debate on such issues, as well as promoting mutual acceptance. It is cost-effective, engages children, and is transferable to other contexts where there is potential to profile children's issues in a range of media to transform communities into ones that protect their children.

Approaches that involve child participation linked to schools are in keeping with existing community development objectives. Local contact with schools both strengthens educational institutions and enables child protection matters to be considered at policy level. The approach is long-term and can be integrated into curriculums. Where areas have been affected by violence and relief operations are in place, this approach can be used as part of a transition from relief to development programming (although, it should be noted, instability may return).

Useful curriculum resources are available from UNESCO, which has developed an extensive resource for grades 1–8 from its work in Africa.

Impact of the project

The importance of access to quality education was expressed many times by the children, community leaders and parents alike. A program supporting education is therefore also a gateway to broadening community response to issues that limit the future of their children.

Indonesia

Children in the IDP camp, West Kalimantan

Photo: Laurence Gray

Efforts to promote peace after recent conflicts and economic turmoil are relatively new in Indonesia. In West Kalimantan, World Vision has established a children's library in an IDP area with a population of approximately 5,000. Significantly, this activity builds local capacity for peer education supervised by community members; the community supports the library, as a priority is placed on education: it is seen as a mechanism to give children options to move away from the IDP camp. Some young people go to Malaysia or the Middle East to work; the boys as labourers, the girls as maids. At the same time, the fear for children is that when they leave the community they will experience discrimination and violence.

The activity has had impact on the community by drawing attention (and resources) to an issue. It has allowed discussion of children's rights and the risks they face in a difficult environment. Some parents in the community have expressed interest in developing preparation information for children who will leave the community to seek work. Developing the capacity of children to protect themselves is seen as an important part of this.

Work at community level has an important advocacy element in terms of the broader issue of the impacts of armed conflict on children, and other current and potential risks to children. Based on their project work with IDPs, NGOs have strong concerns about the risks children face from being trafficked or crossing borders in search of work, and the smuggling of babies for adoption. Local authorities are also aware of the problems as they redefine their role in applying national social protection policy. Government agencies, who are aware of unofficial border-crossing points, have taken this into account, and are able to follow up with the Malaysian Government, which has had concerns about migrant workers. Regulations on child protection are being developed for government staff.

Useful approaches to building child participation in peace building

Peace building through education in North Maluku

This innovative project explores new avenues in peace building through helping war-torn Muslim and Christian communities to focus on their children's education and creating safe communities as a vehicle to foster post-conflict community stabilisation. Approved for funding in late 2001 by a foreign government donor and supported by private donors, the project has three main components:

- providing transitional education support for IDP children (uniforms, books, supplies, teacher support) and forming education committees in IDP communities
- providing support for a trauma healing and creative activities program, and
- facilitating a community communication forum where conflict management skills will be introduced in the context of community discussion groups.

A fund for a "peace project" in each of the 21 communities to be targeted will help them to track and celebrate their own progress toward peace.

World Vision collaborates with UNICEF and Save the Children UK in providing the education supplies and training for teachers and trauma support workers.

The Peace and Tolerance Magazine project: A child-focused peace education initiative in North Maluku

The aim of the Peace and Tolerance Magazine project is to nurture peace attitudes and skills among war-affected school children in grades 4–6, and through the magazine – plus a teacher's supplement – to provide training, curriculum and classroom activities for students and teachers to develop conflict management skills. It is assumed that the magazine will circulate throughout the community, and that teachers (as community leaders) will develop capacities to influence community conflict transformation processes.

The project will produce a 15-edition curriculum over three years and will directly target 10,500 school children and 350 teachers (130 to be intensively trained) in 115 schools in North Maluku. The three main activities are:

- produce the magazine
- train teachers in its use, and
- provide follow-up support, including a mid-term teachers' conference.

Under the leadership of the World Vision project manager, a full-colour prototype of the magazine called *Harmonis* has already been developed and tested in Ambon, in cooperation with the Salawaku Foundation, which partnered with World Vision in a completed alternative education project there. The field test generated a high level of enthusiasm for, and interest in, the magazine. This project is designed to link directly with the Peace Building Through Education in North Maluku project, and will be a further component in World Vision's mutual collaboration with Save the Children.

Programs in other contexts that reduce risks to children in areas of conflict by actively engaging with issues of reconciliation and development can learn from Indonesia's experience. Lessons include:

1. Effective "special" projects with a peace building purpose can be incorporated into existing community work without high costs when designed with long-term strategy and low overheads in mind.

2. Community development project designs have the capacity to support peace building processes that lead to increased trust and a reduction of violence.

3. Physical "connecting" projects, such as road building, enhanced with peace

building strategies can be very effective in communities recovering from violent conflict.

4. However, peace building strategies need to consider a greater focus on processes than on concrete objectives. Activities that work on the latter (e.g. improving physical infrastructure such as roads between formerly conflicting communities) could result in harm, if time-consuming consensus building and organisational processes focusing on trust and confidence building have not been prioritised.

5. Good governance practices are foundational to building peaceable communities. Key elements are good leadership, community participation in decision-making, and principles of restorative justice. [13]

6. Trust and responsible use of power are more likely to occur in contexts where equitable social and economic development occurs. A clear understanding of these dynamics is important when planning projects. [14]

Barriers

• *Estrangement:* The legacy of conflict has been increased tension, reduced exchanges between groups, and children isolated within their communities. Travel carries increased risk, which limits projects regarding location and scope of operation.

• *Poor social policy:* Active civil society engagement with government on emerging social policy requires greater support from key players. The potential impact of this is significant, and warrants greater priority in the interests of influencing a sound legislative framework.

• *Sensitivity on issues* that may inflame old tensions leading to further violence and displacement. This is sometimes an inevitable barrier as engagement itself is a risk which, if not taken, results in avoidance

and inaction. Opportunity exists to build on successful peer education methods in promoting peace; materials could be used to introduce some of the curriculum to the library. Indicators could be developed which may help monitor the fortunes of children who are IDPs.

• *Poor legal protection for children:* There is a need to improve laws and their application to adequately protect women and children, as has recently been acknowledged by government. As part of this, a dedicated position to promote government response on child protection is needed for further progress to be made, and NGOs like World Vision may lead a process of advocacy.

• *Capacity of staff and partners:* Building capacity is a cross-cutting issue for all countries. Creative partnerships are needed to develop new methods, as well as to optimise use of those already developed. "Localising" resources from other areas is well underway in World Vision Indonesia, with a focus on training, working groups and translation. Most importantly, access to materials which are in a local language and which are practically, not academically, oriented is essential.

• *Long-term engagement:* A consistent presence in a changeable environment is necessary for long-term stability and development in post-conflict societies. The risk faced is that tensions encountered affect every aspect of a development activity, to the point of inaction or withdrawal. Agencies and donors alike need to recognise that long-term commitment is needed to engage the areas where there is greatest uncertainty for greater impact.

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[13] Numerous websites about restorative justice include the International Centre for Justice and Reconciliation's *Restorative Justice Online* (http://www.restorativejustice.org/), which states: "Restorative justice is a systematic response to crime that emphasises healing the wounds of victims, offenders and communities caused or revealed by the criminal behaviour. Practices and programs reflecting restorative purposes will: (a) identify and take steps to repair harm done, (b) involve all stakeholders, and (c) transform the traditional relationship between communities and their governments."

[14] World Vision Indonesia's Reconciliation and Peacebuilding Adviser, 2002

The Philippines

Influencing local government in the best interests of the child

Youth leaders at the Bohol Children's Association show a flip chart listing agreed priorities for action

Photo: Laurence Gray

"Rulers should look after their people, not themselves."

– traditional saying

Background

A feature of the operational environment of the Philippines is a strong legislative base, which upholds human and child rights. It is possibly the strongest of the five countries of this study in its legislation to protect children.

However, this does not ensure child protection in practice. The sad reality is that *"there is a great distance between enactment of laws on children's rights and the children's enjoyment of them."* [1]

Child protection concerns identified

Priorities identified by the Committee on the Convention on the Rights of the Child in its 1994 report on the Philippines included:

• access for birth registration of children

• reports of rape or sexual abuse of children

• child abuse and neglect

• reinforced monitoring and improved data collection on children at risk, especially incidence of disability

• increased school retention, and

• protection of children (especially street children) from exploitation.

Although the report is more than eight years old, many of these issues are a continuing concern. Child-focused NGOs including World Vision Development Foundation have been active in commenting on the Government's implementation at national and local levels.

Areas of child protection concerns identified by World Vision

World Vision has identified the following as needing urgent attention:

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[1] Muntarbhorn, V, *A Source Book for Reporting Under the Convention on the Rights of the Child*, UNICEF, EAPRO & Child Rights ASIANET, Bangkok, 1997

- children who are affected by domestic violence in project areas
- children affected by armed conflict in specific areas
- a relatively high number of children in communities having experienced rape
- young women and men from the provinces seeking work as domestic staff in urban areas and being tricked into situations of abuse or exploitation, and
- weak government policy and practice on issues such as substance abuse and combating child labour.

Children have also provided significant further input as to the concerns they believed should be given priority (see under **Impact of the project** section).

An integrated approach

World Vision aims for lasting change in the lives of children, their families and communities. We want to influence policymakers and those in power to have specific programs/budget for children, and strengthen local/national measures to ensure that children are protected and represented.

Partners in this process

Engaging local government at a "meso" level on child protection is one area where some provinces of the Philippines are breaking new ground. A significant initiative in Bohol is a provincial children's code, which sets and monitors standards of a social safety net for children. The formation of the Bohol Children's Code has been a local initiative linked to a national Expanding Children's Participation in Social Reform (ECPSR) program. ECPSR's long-term goal is enhanced children's participation in local governance, and it has national-level government involvement as well as NGO implementation. NGO partners in the national program include PLAN International; World Vision Development Foundation; Education, Research and Development Assistance Foundation; and Christian Children's Fund.

The Bohol Children's Code is one example where an operational framework for child participation links with public awareness, advocacy and coalition-building. The result is policy and programs that support children, families and build community, all in areas prioritised in the CAN study. [2] One difference in the Philippines compared to some other countries of the present study is that decentralising some government functions gives district authorities opportunity to collect tax and respond to local priorities. In this case, a budget for children's activities has been established and lobbying has resulted in a child protection focus with great potential. [3]

UNICEF supported the provincial authority, working with a steering group, to run consultative seminars. This example is a key step in localising international protection provisions expressed in the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC). World Vision has opportunity to monitor the implementation of the code and learn from the process. It may be possible for NGOs such as World Vision to engage local governments in moving to have similar legislation in regions where governance is at such a point that development of local legislation is possible.

Children as partners at community level

Community organisations and supported children's groups (called Children's Associations) are effective avenues to lobby for the full implementation of the existing children's agenda, and to monitor application of national commitments locally.

Children's Associations aim to build the self-esteem of children and are a principal vehicle for engaging the community on child protection. A significant support to the recognition of child participation is in the form of National Government approval: *Executive Order 421*, [4] issued in June 1997, establishes the legal identity of Children's Associations and encourages their support from local authorities. At the time of the study, there were 29 associations, with a membership of 1,165 children.

[2] Dorning, K, *Crying Out: Children and communities speak on abuse and neglect,* World Vision International, 2002 (http://www.wvi.org/imagine/can.htm)

[3] *Implementation Handbook for the Convention on the Rights of the Child*, UNICEF, 1998

[4] *Executive Order No. 421* ("Further amending Executive Order no. 203 dated 27 September 1994, as amended by Executive Order no. 356, dated 12 July 1996") can be viewed on-line at: http://www.childprotection.org.ph/databases/docs/eo421.doc

Young leaders

Photo: Laurence Gray

Child participation is a key part of World Vision's work. Indicators are focused on changes in the lives of children themselves, as they become change agents in their communes with increased recognition from community leaders.

Most of the key informants to this study were well-versed in the political ordinances at national, provincial and local levels with regard to child protection. While this is useful to gain approval for children's organisation, it is also an opportunity to advocate on policy implementation.

Impact of the project

Building hope and promoting child rights through local agents of change is an achievement. Filipino children have become agents of change to increase access to schooling in villages and gain greater responses from different levels of government on children's issues. These practical examples answer the question of what is the end goal of organising children: *"It gives exposure to children's concerns and views, moving them from invisibility to visible in the public domain."* [5]

World Vision has participated with others in influencing the Board of Child Welfare to prioritise a request that the Provincial Government develop child protection legislation. Governance at provincial level in Bohol has been influenced to identify, through the Board of Child Welfare, the following priority areas for child protection:

- domestic violence
- drug addiction
- sexual abuse
- child involvement in armed conflict.

A significant development in Bohol has been the children's own role in identifying what they consider to be priority concerns to be addressed. One was the problem of solvent sniffing; another the need to advocate for safe and decent housing for children and families; and a third has been the need for children to advocate for peace.

Key World Vision activities include:

- training children/youth in leadership and facilitation
- securing children's opportunities to access quality education through day care centre construction, provision of playground facilities, school supplies, learning facilities, repair of school buildings and subsidised school fees
- promotion of values such as respect, tolerance, forgiveness, compassion, justice, the God-given dignity of each person, and participation in community service and faith-based activities [6]
- organising a 30-member children's theatre group as an advocacy tool to promote child rights

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[5] Expanding Children's Participation in Social Reform (ECPSR) project, *Initiative Against Child Labor End-Of-Term Evaluation*, Manila, 2001. See also: *Building a Child-Friendly Nation* published by the National ECPSR coalition of the four NGOs (World Vision Development Foundation, PLAN International, Christian Children's Fund and ERDA Foundation), Manila, 2002. For reports of some achievements of the ECPSR project, see: http://www.unicef.org/philippines/Archive/ECPSR.htm and http://www.unicef.org/philippines/Archive/CFCL.htm

[6] In most parts of the Philippines, Christianity is very visible and integrated into daily life, in a similar way to (for example) the high visibility of the Hindu faith in India or Bali. The study coordinator's perception is that in the Bohol context, the church is seen as an important social institution of a community where faith has an important role; a focal point that is accessible and responsive to children's concerns and provides a unifying or mobilising influence for change. In other countries/communities where Christianity is a minority religion, faith-based activities, if appropriate, would take a different form.

World Vision's understanding of the Christian faith is holistic – meaning that it involves a connection between personal faith, service to others, human rights and social justice, and caring for the earth. World Vision is interested in empowering people, including children, to be leaders in promoting compassion, justice and human dignity and rights, whatever their faith. WVDF recognises that the imposition of a majority "Christian" religion/culture has been associated with dispossession or injustice in some parts of the Philippines, and that even within a mostly Christian province, not everyone shares the same faith. World Vision respects freedom of religion, and proselytising is against World Vision International policy.

- conducting a range of creative learning activities on social issues that children want to learn more about, with 80% of the total membership of Children's Associations participating
- advocating on exploitative child labour/child abuse with the Provincial Child Welfare Council and the Department of Labor; children from the Associations have a role in a provincial "caravan" information campaign to combat child labour
- assisting in *barangay* (village) Child Protection Council formation; providing orientation to six municipalities, one city and 250 public school teachers; raising awareness of teachers on child-related laws and cases of child abuse
- supporting the implementation of the Children's Code
- strengthening children's organisation at the *barangay*, municipal, provincial and regional level so that they are implementing their own plans
- working to ensure that children are represented at all levels of government; this has included achieving membership of the Bohol children's organisation in the National Coalition of Children in the Philippines.

Useful approaches to building child participation

World Vision's Child Protection policy

The international World Vision policy on Child Protection [7] has been adopted by World Vision Development Foundation (WVDF) Philippines, and a national version developed and shared with local NGO and Children's Association partners. This has assisted the inclusion of planning for child protection as part of an integrated program design.

The national World Vision policy will be further localised in the districts. The Bohol World Vision team is drafting a child protection policy to this end, looking into critical provisions/areas in the existing policy.

Advocacy includes support for the information caravan/campaign on child labour initiated by the Department of Labor. The aim is to educate parents and government officials on their responsibility to protect the children and to lessen, if not eradicate, child labour cases in the province.

A dedicated National Child Protection Coordinator, assisting World Vision programs working on child protection issues to further strategic partnerships and support implementation, is a significant resource for this process.

The Bohol Children's Code [8]

The Children's Code is based on the CRC with its articulation of children's rights closely following the four areas of survival, development, protection and participation. Of added significance is a section on *responsibilities* of the child, alongside rights, in the areas of:

- leading a virtuous life
- respecting the family
- respecting elders
- customs
- laws
- principles of democracy, and
- children's responsibility to exert effort in the pursuit of development, participate in the community, and help observe human rights and freedom everywhere.

The Code ascribes roles and responsibilities to different institutions such as family, education, media, judiciary, and local government. It details the responsibility of local authorities to plan for and fund comprehensive programs for young people. It contains policy for prevention programs at local level, parenting courses, health care, recreation, and crisis intervention. It goes on

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[7] See Appendix for a summary of the World Vision Partnership's *Child Protection Policy*. WVDF's adaptation of this policy is available in an online "Toolkit" appendix to *Children at Risk*, at http://www.children.campaign.org.

[8] More details of the Bohol Children's Code are available in the online "Toolkit" appendix to this book (see previous footnote).

to detail special concerns which give greater definition to prohibited acts where there are child protection issues. For example:

"In addition to all acts defined and penalized under Republic Act 7610 on Child Abuse and Exploitation… the following acts shall likewise be punishable:

A. Illegal Recruitment – Any person who recruits other persons for work shall be required to register and secure a permit… with an undertaking not to recruit children.

There is a presumption of illegal trafficking when a person is found together with three or more minors not his or her relative at the pier or port of exit for the purpose of transporting the minors to another place without any permit from the council captain."

The Code includes mechanisms known as Local Councils for the Welfare of Children to coordinate implementation of all policies, programs and projects relative to the survival, development and protection of children. These will be monitored by a Provincial Council, which will have a membership of 21 including three representatives from NGOs; one child; government departments; the provincial attorney; and a representative of the business sector. The Provincial Council will create a desk for children's concerns, which will assist local government when it creates policy that may affect children. The children's desk will provide child impact statements on the likely repercussions of proposed legislation or policy on children and assist the Philippines Government to provide its CRC implementation reports to the United Nations.

The Code includes provision for remedy and penalties where unlawful acts have been committed against a child. This includes mandatory reporting for doctors, hospitals and government workers, and provisions for failure to report.

The Code has 114 sections, is 35 pages long, and was approved by the Bohol Governor in November 2000. The initiative has been shared with other provincial authorities, and has so far been taken up by three others.

The Children's Code is a valuable local resource that enhances child development and protection by providing framework that makes it everyone's job to consider the best interests of the child. Lessons can be learned from the process as well as the outcome.

Community organising can be more effective than casework

Work in partnership and coalitions, where there is opportunity, can maximise results and avoid duplication. Civil society networks or bodies, such as the church, can be a resource in running value-formation courses with the community. World Vision seeks to involve them as partners to advocate with local authorities on issues of child labour (e.g. on sugar plantations or deep-sea fishing in Negros – see text box on a later page), or children not going to school.

Demonstrated examples of good practice in community organising and cooperation between NGOs in the interests of children are evident in Palawan. The "PIGLAS" (*Pinag-isang Lakas Alay sa Kabataan* – United Force for Children) network, also known as the Provincial Taskforce on Child Labour in Palawan, has 22 organisations as members and a principal aim of addressing the issue of child labour. The 22 members, including national and local government departments, International Organisations, NGOs and people's organisations, each bring areas of expertise and efforts are made to avoid duplication.

The network engages government in planning the provision of children/youth services. It is unified and has a collective strategy to take action on child protection issues such as child labour. It is in the process of being registered as a legal entity, which will

increase opportunity for it to apply for funds in its own right to support it in its stated roles.

Provincial Taskforce on Child Labour in Palawan (PIGLAS)

Objectives:

- Establish a provincial city and municipal-based mechanism for detecting, monitoring and reporting cases of child labour
- Conduct investigation, search and rescue on cases of child labour
- Facilitate the lodging of complaints for court cases and other para-legal requirements as needed
- Provide physical and psycho-social services to victims as required
- Coordinate with other stakeholders regarding victims
- Increase level of awareness of this issue in the community
- Conduct research and establish a database and documentation of child labour that will substantiate policy development and advocacy
- Raise funds for the taskforce to fulfil its role.

Key responsibilities of members, according to areas of expertise:

- Investigation and rescue
- Social service
- Education and public awareness
- Prosecution and para-legal
- Secretariat, administration
- Research and documentation

World Vision has promoted and resourced the PIGLAS network in its establishment phase. One member organisation that has been especially valuable for World Vision to link up with is the Environmental Legal Assistance Center (ELAC), a group that has a focus on environmental security linked to livelihoods.

The chair of PIGLAS is with the Department of Labour, which ensures the network can assist the Department's task of combating child labour as well as advocate to local, provincial and national government on priority issues.

Identified operating constraints are the bureaucracy of government, which slows down effective action on child labour, and vested interests of local politicians. Examples were given of gaps between well-meaning policy and the services required to effectively implement them. Opportunities also exist to better monitor how policy is implemented and to strengthen practice by increasing capacity.

The benefits to the community and to organisational effectiveness of a functioning network cannot be overstated. The principle of linking with others to increase effectiveness is well-established in development practice, however its application and responsiveness to community is questionable in many cases. The PIGLAS example is one where NGOs, governmental bodies and community-based groups have worked well together.

Case study: Deep-sea fishing, a hazardous form of labour

Coordinated advocacy is needed to combat specific problems such as exploitative child labour in deep-sea fishing off the coast of Negros. Activities have included a public awareness campaign, which led to a television documentary on the problem of dangerous fishing practices. This in turn has prompted greater attention but no real change in practice, as families with political connections own the large fishing fleets.

Deep-sea fishing is a recognised hazardous form of labour. The Environmental Legal Assistance Center (ELAC) is linked with the World Wildlife Fund, the Marine Alliance International and the International Labour Organization on this issue. A current case is underway involving two under-age boys who have been involved in this type of labour. World Vision has supported the boys in their preparation for the case through regular contact and linkage to legal representation.

Cases like this can also bring into focus the wider issue of corporate responsibility of a commercial industry. Economic decisions can be child-friendly or child-blind. The dominant mode of work needs to be challenged when it is not in the interests of children. [9]

This children's drawing shows children diving under the boat to drive the fish towards the nets

Photo: Laurence Gray

Benji was 15 years old on 7 December 2000 when he went with friends to work on a fishing boat, sorting fish. This work, for which he was paid 3000 *pesos* (approximately US$60), was to last three months. His job involved catching fish in the water, from four o'clock in the morning until six at night. The Paaling and Muro-ami method used, according to ILO, is considered extremely hazardous to the health and lives of young children. Benji was using a hose with weights to drop on the coral, which made the fish swim in the direction of a pre-set net. The boys do this at a depth of approximately 60 metres.

On 24 December, when the boat returned to port for supplies, Benji and several other boys left, not to return, because of the hardships they had endured. The boys sought help from World Vision and are now in the care of the Department of Social Welfare. Four of them have made official complaints to the Department resulting from their experience.

World Vision and other concerned groups and agencies have been supporting Benji as he goes through the process and court hearing. The case has been rejected at the provincial level and will now go to the national level. Some boys have withdrawn their complaint, possibly due to threats or payment. Powerful families, whose influence is extensive, own the fishing fleets and commercial interests in this area.

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[9] *Globalisation and Child Rights: What role for the private sector?* Save the Children, 2002

Barriers to child protection and participation

• World Vision Development Foundation in the Philippines is involved in some exciting, innovative and effective work to promote the protection of children. Challenges remain, however, in the areas of documenting its impact and content, weighing its impact over time, extending good practice to other areas, gaining financial support for innovative work, and building capacity of local staff and counterparts.[10]

• Traditional notions of the role of children in society mean that there is reluctance in some families to "listen" to their children, in the belief that this may result in a lack of respect for elders. This is consistent with views expressed in Sri Lanka and Cambodia. Activities that sensitise families to child participation may assist in this, as has been the case in those two countries.

• Agencies need to be responsive to issues that emerge as affecting children in the community, which may warrant advocacy. However, conflicting priorities arise when this is not the main focus of their work. Linking with established networks helps, but increasing staff capacity and resources is the best way to ensure that staff do not take on excessive workloads, or place themselves at risk, out of commitment to tackling advocacy issues.

• Instability and lack of peace and order in areas of the country can hinder activities and engender discouragement, apathy or intimidation.

• Political will is needed to back policy change with practical implementation. Legislation and policy is a cornerstone for a comprehensive response to child protection, however without the resources or political will to implement it, it makes little difference to children. Inadequate resource allocation to stated priority areas gives a negative message about the authority's actual commitment to children.

Bohol province has the policy, which has been an exercise in political will. It is unclear if the necessary resourcing will follow. While this study's coordinator was in Bohol, for example, a meeting with the Department of Labour revealed problems of under-resourced provincial government authorities, given the scope of their task. As a department, they lacked an estimated US$2000 to undertake a baseline survey to identify incidence of child labour in industry. Lack of a baseline makes it difficult to measure impact. Greater public awareness has been generated through information campaigns, however lack of resources means that cases of child abuse reported are not always being acted upon.

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[10] Muntarbhorn, V, 1997

Sri Lanka

Children as partners in community

"What you have made yourself is worth a fortune."

– traditional saying

Background

Sri Lanka is a poor country that has experienced prolonged conflict and tension resulting from ethnic differences and governance issues. This 19-year conflict has caused much damage to the country's economy and the future of its children, as well as to the warring parties. All Sri Lankan children today were born into and have lived their entire lives in a country ravaged by conflict. The parties to the conflict have paid limited attention to humanitarian law, and according to Save the Children,[1] many have used children as propaganda tools. There are over 900,000 children living in areas directly affected by conflict; thousands have been denied their rights to protection, have lost family members or relatives, or have had their education disrupted.

Despite these obstacles, Sri Lankan children have made their voices heard in a number of ways, including in a national activity leading up to the United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) on Children, held in 2002.

Child protection concerns identified

Children have views on issues affecting them and need avenues to express these views. In Sri Lanka, they have prioritised the country's economy, education system, health care, the situation of the family, and armed conflict as issues that affect them today and limit their future. Specific child protection concerns raised by the children from World Vision project areas participating in the "Sri Lankan Children's Challenge" initiative leading up to UNGASS include:

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[1]   *The Sri Lankan Children's Challenge*, Save the Children UK, 2002

[2]   Areas along the 'border' between territory held by the Sri Lankan Army and that held by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) during the conflict

Sri Lanka

Children affected by conflict

A 13-year old girl, participating in a group discussion like the one pictured, shared that she had been to an LTTE staging area after a recruitment drive in local villages. She said that there were 25 other children of her age who had been transported there by truck in preparation for a move to the training camp. She left because she missed her family and was worried when she would see them again if she went to the training camp.

One young woman who is the top student from the area has wanted to pursue further education outside of her village area; she has the support of her family to do so. However the LTTE, not wanting people to leave their villages, instructed the school principals not to issue leaving certificates which are required for children to go on to higher study. With renewed peace talks, the effects of conflict in reducing access to education may now change for other children.

Photos: Laurence Gray

- alcoholism and domestic violence affecting children in project areas
- armed conflict affecting children nationally
- sexual exploitation of children, especially by paedophiles, nationally and in tourist areas
- displaced and mobile populations due to conflict, in border [2] areas and nationally
- young women and men seeking work as domestic staff in other countries being tricked into situations of abuse or exploitation
- government policy and practice such as institutional care and capacity to respond-adequately to violence against children
- capacity of government institutions to ensure protection of children
- access to quality education in areas of tension.

Areas of priority for World Vision are in the North and North-East of Sri Lanka, which are now becoming open to relief initiatives. Children in these locations have been particularly affected by conflict and isolated from assistance. Key issues have been access to education, capacity building of local counsellors, and children being lured from IDP camps to the LTTE training camps.

An integrated approach

World Vision's Child Protection Policy

World Vision Sri Lanka has taken steps to integrate child protection with development project design and implementation. A policy on child protection standards and provision has been developed through a dedicated staff position. Screening mechanisms including police and reference checks are used for new staff; this extends to volunteers working with projects.
The policy is highlighted as part of orientation and at other staff training events, and team leaders have the responsibility of briefing project staff on the policy.

A World Vision poster educating on child abuse with its "good touch, bad touch" message is used through children's clubs and other projects. The value of visual resources, which link image to concept to laws, cannot be overstated.

The dedicated position will be further resourced next financial year, and budget allocated to assist in policy implementation. This will enable translation of relevant materials, specific training for community mobilisers,
and better monitoring of policy implementation at project level.

Project linkage

Policy change and raising the awareness of senior staff has enabled principles to be applied at community level. The Children's Society approach (see following section), which was in existence before the policy, has changed its focus to engage in child protection. It used to be a vehicle for child development through education but the children did not set their own agenda. Children and the wider community now know that they have rights and that World Vision wants to work with them to promote child protection. These societies are now an avenue for participation of children based on the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC), and community members have been influenced by staff to include children's views in discussions on community planning.

Guidelines have been prepared on what to do if there is an issue of child abuse in the community:

"In the past, if a child was abused in the community, World Vision would urge the community leaders to make a complaint to police. Today staff take issues to the courts with families to get justice for children. World Vision now takes a vehicle to the police station and parks it there, so that the community can see that World Vision is supporting this."

– World Vision Sri Lanka CEDC specialist

Sri Lanka

Partnership for education in Padiyatalawa

As well as liaising with the National Child Protection Authority and law enforcers on cases of child abuse, World Vision Sri Lanka has worked in partnerships to tackle the issue of access to quality education, another of the five priority issues identified by children in the Children's Challenge report. The World Vision Sri Lanka program has a valuable model, which works with education authorities to improve the situation for children at the Padiyatalawa development project. A household survey of 4,000 families showed that child abuse was a concern in the community, with many children having experienced some form of abuse. The District director of education was approached about working on this issue through 10 schools in the area.

A training curriculum was developed to give orientation and training to the 10 principals and two teachers per school. More detailed training was then prepared for 30 children per school one day per week over two months. Consultants have been used in this process and one staff member coordinates and supports the child-to-child approach. The expectation was that these 30 children would then pass their training on to a further 10 children each, and in the process become youth leaders with their peers.

Projects pass information on to World Vision Sri Lanka's specialist on CEDC (Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances), who then writes an official letter to the National Child Protection Authority (NCPA) to inform them of the case. Later, he follows up with the NCPA and requests follow-up if action has been slow. Cooperation with the special unit of the Women's and Children's Bureau in the police is strong and similar follow-up occurs.

To date, two cases have been pursued in this way. Project leaders pass the information on, although they are sometimes afraid of possible negative consequences. Recently, World Vision has responded to a case where a 9-year-old girl in a community was raped by an off-duty soldier. The family was afraid to report. The girl needed to go to the hospital, which reported the case (due to mandatory reporting), but the family was still fearful and did not corroborate the report. World Vision project staff contacted the family to say that they would support the case going forward and provide financial support. The whole project team of five went to the police station to support the family when they made their report.

Partners in this process

Promoting child protection is a political task as well as a development priority. Sri Lanka has an effective model of gaining national attention through political advocacy using the mechanisms of government and media. Save the Children, working with other NGOs, timed the "Sri Lankan Children's Challenge" to coincide with the UNGASS on Children. Children from different organisations' programs were involved in the Challenge, which surveyed 11,000 children and drew up a list of priorities. While its recommendations are general, they are worthy of note with regard to program planning in the interests of children. They urge response to the following areas (which coincide with World Vision's own country strategy):

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[3] Pauline Taylor McKeown, Save the Children Sri Lanka, interview, 2002

- economic problems
- access to and quality of education
- a safe home environment
- the effects of armed conflict
- health

A strong push by Save the Children to support children to advocate for themselves was successful. It led to provincial meetings of children and a children's parliament where a children's agenda was formed and presented to the Government. Notably, Save the Children reviewed its own programs in light of the children's agenda, and plans to improve the monitoring of CRC criteria at community level, as the national approach is inevitably "distant". The problem of child abuse, for example, has been noted in the 1998 presidential taskforce reports but no clear idea is expressed as to how this links to monitoring in the community. Children's organisations have identified local issues and advocated with local authorities.

Save the Children has observed that some issues are sensitive in local communities when it impacts on profit or politics. For this reason, children need to be equipped through training in ways to protect themselves when advocating on an issue.

Entry points to communities

Increased child participation, and specific education approaches, are two ways to reduce the risks children face. There are others.

World Vision's work with community leaders on issues such as livelihood and credit also ensures community recognition and support for children to develop more of a voice through the Children's Societies (see following section). Development experience in Sri Lanka shows that a twin process of developing community and children gives a stronger structure for Children's Societies to act together across an area. Since micro-credit addresses a key issue of poverty, it links well with child protection measures.

The challenge of linkage is a critical one, as advocacy opportunities exist if data is shared and appropriate indicators set.

World Vision's study on child abuse and neglect [4] noted the importance of public awareness and coalition-building that grows from the needs in the community and does not over-sensationalise issues.

The Sri Lankan conflict has constrained advocacy, in that comment on its negative impacts on child development as outlined in the CRC could put staff and projects at risk. For example, the LTTE communicated that they didn't want NGOs to comment on their involvement of children in the armed conflict. (At the international level, however, there has been NGO pressure on the LTTE not to use children as soldiers.)

At community level, nonetheless, there have been useful examples of children advocating locally on other issues of protection, and promoting change.

Useful approaches to building child participation

Examples of children working effectively to influence families, communities and government are clear in Sri Lanka. Promoting children through developing people's organisations, establishing or strengthening children's associations, and introducing a child rights curriculum in schools are examples of child protection in practice. Lessons may be learned from good practice in this area and applied to other areas, influence government policy/practice, and/or contribute to practice in other countries. [5]

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[4] Dorning, K, *Crying Out: Children and communities speak on abuse and neglect*, World Vision International, 2002 (http://www.wvi.org/imagine/can.htm)

[5] *Implementation Handbook for the Convention on the Rights of the Child*, UNICEF, 1998

Sri Lanka

Children's play showing the effect of alcohol on a family: the drunken father tries to rouse his family who have taken poison to escape his beatings and the poverty caused by his addiction. Sri Lanka's children have become agents of change on this issue of alcohol-induced violence in the home.

CRC materials (these ones produced by Save the Children) are used to promote awareness. Program planning that further emphasises the CRC could add impact to these activities. One community mobiliser requested further training in applying the CRC, linking children's societies to income-earning options, and using games or sports with children.[6]

The Pottuvil Children's Society, with membership of 110 from one village, involved in a trust-building activity. Children's societies provide a valuable link with the community and future leaders.

Photos: Laurence Gray

Children's Societies

With the support of World Vision and with approval and recognition from local authorities, Children's Societies (membership aged 7–15) have been established in 13 villages near Pottuvil, the main town of Amarai district. They have a membership of 1,400. A youth forum (membership aged 16–30) with 140 members covering eight villages has also been established. The club structure gives voice to children's concerns in villages and strengthens their ability to take action. In one village where there have been high levels of alcoholism, the Children's Society

[6] Parbha, P, *Home Truths: Domestic violence and its impact on women and children*, Save the Children UK, 1999

leader, a boy of 16, has set up a food stand, which is the only "fast food" on offer. He sells fried cassava and makes a small profit. He does not serve men who are drunk.

The Children's Society operation includes a discussion on values, which is significant given that Sri Lanka has one of the world's highest suicide and alcoholism rates. This aspect could be strengthened through using a curriculum of areas the club could cover over a 12-month period, drawing upon a child rights programming framework; this would give opportunity for monitoring on the four clusters of child rights. Other useful programming areas may include life skill training; including developing children's awareness of ways to protect themselves from domestic violence or recruitment into armed conflict.

The Children's Societies have held "unity camps" where children from three different clubs come together for a day of activity, food and sharing. These have been popular with the children who want to meet other children and discuss common issues. Traditional and religious stories that support the theme of unity are used.

The Children's Societies are represented through a federation, one activity of which is assisting children with access to education through scholarships. The societies are also to be involved in activities that assist in ADP work, such as writing up the annual child report folders for sponsored children. The children's federation comments on economic strategies for the area and what community groups plan to do to increase economic activity. This includes discussions on cash crops, storage and production facilities, which increase options for children in the longer term. Other areas that children's and youth societies may be supported in researching include the high rate of youth suicide and the effect of domestic violence on children.

Youth participation in action:
two thirds of Children's Society members are girls.

Photo: Laurence Gray

Other useful models

- Child-led research has assisted previously ignored issues to emerge. An example is access to medicines: children in one World Vision-assisted community conducted a survey on the supply of medicines to pharmacies where the supply was inadequate. This was then presented to local authorities and procedures were adopted to improve access to medicines.

- Advocating to courts on children's issues has led to change. One example was in Jaffna where greater awareness on child rights through Save the Children's efforts led magistrates to find community-based alternatives to putting unaccompanied children in institutions. World Vision may have an opportunity to link with such a scheme through the National Child Protection Authority, which is targeting lawyers, the medical profession and the judiciary to be briefed on child rights.

- Monitoring activities of the Government, such as issuing birth certificates, can give children a voice. Research in partnership with children has led Save the Children to dialogue with the Government and to a partnership with PLAN International. This focus has led to a government review of practice and changes to ease the process of obtaining birth certificates for children.

Sri Lanka

Impact of the project

Some impacts of children's active participation in identifying and acting on issues related to child protection are shown in these two stories:

The courage of children

The Children's Society of Pottuvil community challenged the brewing and selling of illegal liquor to the men of the village. The alcohol was dangerous as well as addictive and had poisoned many drinkers. Some alcoholics were as young as 11. Public feeling on the problems alcohol was causing in the community was high, but many feared the vendors.

"Children told the sellers how their fathers behave after consuming alcohol and pleaded with them to stop, asking them to sell things which improved people's lives instead of ruining them," said Thangeswari, aged 12. A survey by the children showed that a total of 16 people, mainly women, sold illicit liquor in the area.

The work of children to free their parents from alcoholism had a ripple effect, and in February 2002 a mass rally involving an estimated 10,000 people met on the theme of alcoholism. The rally gained extensive media coverage as it travelled over 90 kilometres through many villages and involved children, adults, NGOs and government officials. As a result of the rally, after an absence of 20 years the government department of Excise became involved in the area to catch illegal sellers.

The child organisers have shared their experience at a national children's forum. World Vision supported these children in their efforts to form coalitions, promote public awareness and change. This has been a huge boost for child protection measures locally.

"Sincerity and innocence will in the end triumph."

– traditional saying

As a result of children's activism, community members march against the sale and consumption of illegal alcohol.

Photo provided by World Vision Sri Lanka

Access to quality education in Padiyatalawa

When a 4,000-household survey indicated child abuse was a major concern at the Padiyatalawa development project, World Vision Sri Lanka worked with education authorities at school and district levels to ensure children were aware of avenues of action in the event of a situation of abuse. This has been put to the test and authorities have acted on information received from children.

Families report that children are actively speaking on issues that affect them. Education authorities in the district are supportive of the approach, and have encouraged World Vision to extend into neighbouring areas. The project has also broken

new ground by including sex education as part of the approach; it is not part of the general curriculum nationally. The project has received visits from World Vision community development program managers from India, who are keen to apply lessons there.

Resources required to engage children and local schools in this way are relatively small when compared to other operational areas. The number of children reached and the change in education curriculum are significant, and would warrant further documentation and extension. This component is complemented by work to improve or renew physical resources such as school buildings, school supplies, accommodation support to teachers, and scholarships for children.

Barriers to child protection and participation

The long-running conflict in Sri Lanka may thankfully be coming to an end with renewed peace talks. Any celebration of greater peace and opportunity for development must also recognise the needs of affected children and the long-term legacy of prolonged conflict. Hope for the future can be found in the rebuilt lives of all, but especially those of the children benefiting from increased security and opportunity.

- The tensions of conflict and the legacy of war have left practical challenges such as landmines, former child soldiers and poor infrastructure. They have also left communities divided, high rates of domestic violence, and high levels of mental trauma in children and adults who have had direct exposure to conflict.
- Children have dreams for their future and are confident that they can apply

themselves to reach them. Desired occupations identified by a second children's club of 30 children included teacher, doctor, and engineer. However, the ongoing conflict was identified by children as the single biggest barrier they face to fulfilling their dreams:

"It reduces our opportunities; our village gets pressure from both sides of the conflict. The LTTE tax us and threaten us; if you have a business making profit is very hard. The Government says that if they suffer casualties near our village they will beat up the whole village."

In areas where conflict has been more apparent and there are over 600,000 currently displaced people (of which 300,000 are children), the effect on children is more pronounced. Their dreams for the future are reduced as their exposure to options is limited. One World Vision staff member reported:

Sri Lanka

"I spoke to a group of children who were around 12 years old and asked them of their dreams. They said they wanted to be Catholic priests and nuns. When I asked why, they said 'because these are the only people we have seen who don't use or support violence'."

While this is a powerful expression of children's desire for peace (and a credit to the priests and nuns), it is also indicative of the way prolonged violent conflict shapes children's dreams for the future.

- Access to communities in the North and North-East of the country has been difficult because of changing security. Managing involvement in a changing environment is difficult.

- Development NGOs increasingly need to incorporate monitoring on child protection in areas of recent conflict where the principal entry point is through relief, not development efforts. Monitoring on issues of access to food security, health and shelter is needed, but at the same time there is a need to look at levels of violence still present in-community and ways to promote safer ways to deal with tension.

- Ineffectiveness of government institutions needs to be addressed. Reform in government institutions is needed in Sri Lanka to support the growing awareness among community members about improved responses to child protection. This is something that NGOs can follow up with the United Nations, as it is part of the UN's role to strengthen institutions. World Vision has an opportunity to have input from our fieldwork into this process, and also through following up the Government's action in response to the UNGASS on Children and the Second World Congress against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children.

- Other areas to monitor include police and social service responses to reported cases of child abuse.

- Lack of documentation is a barrier. The non-government sector is involved in some exciting, innovative and effective work to promote the protection of children. The effect of this could be improved with documenting its impact and content, weighing its impact over time, "going to scale" (extending successful local activities to maximise benefits in other geographical areas), gaining financial support for innovative work, and building capacity of local staff and counterparts.

"World Vision needs to be a voice on and behalf of children. If not, we become isolated from need and our focus on the child."

– Mr. Yu Hwa Li, National Director

- Increased advocacy is needed. Key areas for advocacy are children affected by armed conflict (including former child soldiers), education, and health. Increased monitoring and evaluation of existing work can contribute significantly to advocacy. Further research initiatives can enable NGOs to lead a process in the interests of children as well as participate in broader campaigns.

- The effect of poverty on the development of children is a barrier. Poor living conditions experienced by children are an ongoing concern. UN Habitat's research [7] shows improved social indicators such as sleep patterns, health and participation in school are linked to improved housing – not only more living space, but access to open space and improved sanitation.

- Partnerships are highlighted as an important strategy in working to achieve a safer world for children. Opportunities exist for child-focused NGOs to partner with a range of groups and to be at the table when critical issues are being discussed. But the resources need to be committed if meaningful links are to be established and partnership given the priority it deserves.

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[7] Interview with Tony Seneviratne, National Director, Habitat for Humanity, Sri Lanka

Vietnam

Community-based rehabilitation of children with disabilities: Expanding the idea of community

Tran Van Hoang, aged 17, lives with his parents, two brothers and one sister in Ward 15, District 8 of Ho Chi Minh City. Hoang contracted polio when he was one month old and lost the use of his legs. He had also lost the sight in one eye through malnutrition and measles. When the project began, he was spending most of his time inside the house, rarely venturing out. He could not walk at all, not even with his hands.

The Community-Based Rehabilitation project referred him to appropriate treatment and rehabilitation services, and also encouraged him to become financially independent. With the exercise from using his new wheelchair, Hoang's body became stronger. He now has an artificial eye, which has improved his confidence in interacting with others.

He is often seen in the community now, earning an income by selling lottery tickets. He is supporting his parents – something that is important for any Asian child.

*"Each of us is marked by the Creator with his destiny.
None escapes."*

"Be generous to others. One day you will need other people's generosity."

– traditional sayings

Photos: World Vision Vietnam

Vietnam

Background

Community-based rehabilitation works with children with disabilities in-community to promote their safety and quality of life. Discussions with colleagues and key informants revealed that this approach in Vietnam offers documented learning in this significant child protection area. The CAN study [1] showed that *public awareness on issues of abuse and neglect appears to be extremely limited* and that *there appears to be little debate on such issues at any level in the community.* A recommendation was that advocates should closely work with programs to *ensure true representation of the situation,* and that *it is necessary for both government and non-government agencies to form active coalitions in order to respond to child maltreatment.*

World Vision Vietnam, in partnership with the Government of Viet Nam, began responding to issues concerning children in especially difficult circumstances (CEDC) in 1991, and program activities included services for children with disabilities. Key government ministries in the establishment of policies and guidelines to assist children with disabilities included the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and Training and the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs.

These ministries developed detailed National Plans of Action to support activities for children with disabilities. Community-based rehabilitation (CBR) was seen as a potentially effective and cost-efficient intervention and was incorporated into these plans. Various agencies, particularly the Ministry of Health, began to develop CBR service programs, focused primarily on children living in rural areas. The Rehabilitation Department of the National Paediatric Institute also played a leading role in the development of CBR in Vietnam.

Child protection concerns identified

Recognising the special needs of a disabled child, assistance extended…shall be provided free of charge, whenever possible, taking into account the financial resources of the parents or others caring for the child, and shall be designed to ensure that the disabled child has effective access to and receives education, training, health care services, rehabilitation services, preparation for employment and recreation opportunities in a manner conducive to the child's achieving the fullest possible social integration and individual development, including his or her cultural and spiritual development.

– Article 23.3, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

In 1997, the Ho Chi Minh City People's Committee reported that District 4 and District 8 were the two poorest districts in the city. Access to adequate utilities, clean water, legal housing, basic health care and education services was problematic for all residents, and especially for poor families, due to the lack of resources for these services. The 1995 census reported that there were 6,000 "slum-dwelling" families, and approximately 10,000 chronically jobless adults. District 8 includes a major port facility, and many poor families from other provinces continued to arrive in the district looking for work as labourers. However, local authorities reported that the jobless rate continued to increase. In addition, many of these same families were living illegally in the district, making their long-term living situation uncertain.

In a 1995 baseline survey, World Vision Vietnam interviewed 300 randomly-selected families of street children in Ho Chi Minh City. [2] This survey revealed that:

- 46% of fathers and 54% of mothers interviewed had not completed primary school education
- 42% of families had no access to latrines
- almost 30% of the caregivers were "single" mothers

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[1] Dorning, K, *Crying Out: Children and communities speak on abuse and neglect,* World Vision International, 2002 (http://www.wvi.org/imagine/can.htm)

[2] Culnane, A & L, *Ho Chi Minh City Assistance To Disabled Children, Phase 1 Mid-Term Project Evaluation,* unpublished paper, Culnane Consulting International, 2000

- 46% of children were not registered in school
- of families interviewed who had children under 24 months of age, none had completed the recommended immunisation program for their young child
- 19.7% of the families interviewed had family members with a disability.

These features of the community increase the risk of children experiencing abuse or neglect. According to UNICEF, [3] more than a million children live with some form of disability. Many never receive education; almost half of those aged 7–17 are illiterate. "Many disabled children are condemned to a life of non-productivity, dependency and limited opportunity," reports UNICEF Vietnam's website.

These findings, and negotiation with authorities, led to the establishment of the Ho Chi Minh City Assistance for Disabled Children project in 1998.

In meetings during 1997, officials from the District 8 People's Committee, the District 8 Committee for the Protection and Care of Children (CPCC) and the District 8 Department of Health stated that there were no formal rehabilitation services provided at the district level, nor were there any primary care CBR services being offered at the ward level. [4] General conclusions drawn from these meetings were that there were few human resources readily available to work with and manage rehabilitation services, few financial resources to fund activities, and that knowledge and skill levels, both on disability in general and on rehabilitation/CBR services in particular, could be significantly improved.

This was cited as one of the reasons that District 8 statistics on disability prevalence were quite low – though under-reporting of disability is common in less-developed countries. Research has suggested that prevalence of moderate and severe disability for less developed regions is around 4.8%, which would correspond to some 5,000 of a population of 103,000 children [5] being moderately or severely disabled. [6]

An integrated approach

The community-based rehabilitation (CBR) approach is part of a larger long-term involvement by World Vision in the Ho Chi Minh City area. This broader involvement brings the organisation into contact with a range of issues and conditions. It allows for engagement in numerous areas that can add to the quality of life for children. This fits with the World Vision Partnership's approach to area development programs (ADPs). [7]

Partners in this process

- At the district level, World Vision Vietnam has a yearly Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs.
- Additionally, a Plan of Action is signed by World Vision Vietnam with the People's Committee, which has overall authority in the district. Monthly work plans are developed and implemented with the Committee for Population, Family and Children (CPFC) [8], World Vision Vietnam's implementing partner. Project Management Boards, made up of local government agencies and mass organisations (CPFC, the Women's Union, the Departments of Health and Education, Red Cross, and others) formulate, manage and monitor project activities. In the Vietnamese context, Project Management Boards do not make decisions independently of People's Committee policy and procedures. [9]

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[3] See UNICEF Vietnam website's information about disability at: http://www.unicef.org.vn/disable.htm/

[4] Vietnamese cities and provinces are divided administratively into Districts and then Wards.

[5] Government of Viet Nam population estimate, 1998

[6] Einar Helander, *Prejudice and Dignity: An Introduction to Community-Based Rehabilitation*, UNDP, New York, 1999. Einar Helander is a leading proponent of community-based rehabilitation for people with disabilities.

[7] See **Appendix** for some of the principles of World Vision's Area Development Program approach.

[8] The Committee for the Protection and Care of Children (CPCC) in 2001 became the Committee for Population, Family and Children (CPFC).

[9] Fisher, J, *Nongovernments: NGOs and the political development of the Third World*, Kumarian Press, 1998

- At the community level, World Vision Vietnam develops strong day-to-day working relationships with local families, the ones who will benefit directly from the program. Key in this process is the role of community volunteers who are trained and supported by World Vision. This allows for deeper impact and the development of human resources in the community, which will be available after the project finishes.

Impact of the project

Evaluations of World Vision Vietnam's community-based rehabilitation work have indicated that:

- **Increased knowledge…** and awareness of disability has been noted in the families of children with disabilities, the community and the government. Prior to the project, people had a low awareness of how to assist children with disability. Their definitions showed little understanding of "disability" beyond restricted movement or seeing/hearing difficulty; intellectual or psychiatric conditions were not in their category of disability. Now, there is greater understanding; for example, family members and others in the community understand that many children with disabilities need to receive nutritional attention. These changes in thinking and attitudes were all made possible through various training approaches that have been provided.

- **Increased ownership…** has followed increased awareness. Service providers themselves wanted to do more, but increased motivation in the communities to assist children with disabilities has led to requests for support from World Vision. This is significant, because previously it was usually World Vision approaching the community to provide assistance or plan activities for these children. There has also been greater contribution from local government agencies to the project.

- **Increased options…** have meant that

local government officers, volunteers, CBR workers, and their family members now have a range of ways to help children who have disabilities. Prior to the project, local responses would typically see such children (if they were responded to at all) removed from the family home and sent to the hospital, to be provided with medicine or physical rehabilitation. Now, building on the knowledge that children with disabilities need to – and can – go to school, have friends, go outside, and enjoy fresh air, communities provide greater options for these children to fulfil their need for social, mental and educational rehabilitation.

- **Increased quality of life…** has been evident in the children themselves. Some have made progress in mobility. Equally or more importantly, many have become outgoing, no longer afraid of meeting people other than their family members. Some children's speech impairments have improved, as they have had more visitors, volunteers and local government officers to communicate with. The involvement of these people is stimulating for children, as it reflects interest in/valuing of them by others. Children respond to this with increased levels of energy, engagement and enquiry. Their voices are now heard – encouraging others, or speaking on issues that affect them. Through modelling approaches, World Vision encourages the local government to take on this issue by training and involving volunteers.

- **Specific influence on public policy** for provision of services to children has occurred. Vietnam's policy is that the state, society and community will provide health care, support for foster care, education, cultural activities, physical training and sport, and that public buildings will be accessible for people with disability. Specific applications of the policy are not always apparent, however: building designs do not take disability into account. On the other hand, hospitals do often exempt poor children with disabilities from, or give them discounts on, the costs of medical services.

Photos: World Vision Vietnam

Huynh Tan Nghia

Nghia is 18 years old and lives with his mother and stepfather in Ward 1, District 8 of Ho Chi Minh City. Like many in District 8, his family is poor. When Nghia was three, he developed a high fever. His parents took him to a hospital and the doctor diagnosed that he had contracted polio. He lost the mobility of both his legs and learned to walk with his hands.

For many years, his parents took him to various hospitals and clinics for physical therapy, radiotherapy, acupuncture and traditional medicine, hoping to restore the mobility of his legs. If they had any money, they took him for treatments. But none worked with polio, and the parents ended up spending considerable money for these services.

When Nghia was 12, he started going to school. However, he was often made fun of and pushed by other students. Nghia says he was humiliated and felt resentment towards his classmates and teachers.
He also says the teachers did not want him in school, considering him a troublemaker because his presence in the classroom would distract other students from focusing on study. Even so, he persevered for almost two years before he finally decided to leave school. He became withdrawn.

When the community-based rehabilitation (CBR) project started in his district, Nghia was provided with a long-distance wheelchair by the project. Volunteer CBR workers often visited and encouraged him to go out. No longer having to walk with his hands in public, he started to feel more comfortable going out and mixing with others. These days he is often seen in the community, taking a walk in his wheelchair. He has made friends. He is also able to go shopping for his mother. Nghia says he is very happy now and no longer feels ashamed of himself.

Few buildings are designed for wheelchair access, however, so Nghia was also taken to the Ho Chi Minh City Paediatric Rehabilitation and Orthopaedic Centre to make a set of splints, which enable him to walk with his legs, aided by crutches. The photo shows him standing up, on the same level as others, for the first time since he contracted polio at age 3. His facial expression shows emotions of victory and determination.

With project staff recommendation and encouragement from a volunteer CBR worker, he started to go three nights a week to a night school where many poor children study basic mathematics, reading and writing. And because of his talent in repairing machines, he started attending a vocational training school during the day to become a motorcycle mechanic. He graduated in 2002 and is now financially independent.

Nghia and his parents thank the people who helped and kept encouraging him. His mother said, "Nghia always stayed at home before, except when he went to the hospital or clinics. The only thing I hoped for my son was to be healthy and independent. Because he only has sisters, after we [the parents] die, he needs to take care of himself. Now I know this is possible. His life has changed completely.

Thank you."

Vietnam

"States Parties recognise that a mentally or physically disabled child should enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child's active participation in the community."

– Article 23.1, Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989

"Children have traditionally been seen as objects of charity rather than subjects of rights. Politicians, professionals and of course parents, have cared for their well-being, but primarily in the spirit of protecting the vulnerable. It was not widely recognised that children are also capable, that they have opinions, that they deserve respect as all other human beings and that they ought to have 'rights' ."

– Thomas Hammarberg, Vice-chair, UN Committee on the Rights of the Child; Ambassador and special adviser to the Swedish Government on humanitarian issues, 1996

Useful approaches to building disabled children's participation

The lives of children who have disabilities are constrained on many levels, and clearly, the barriers to their participation in community life stem not only from their actual disabilities but also from others' attitudes to or understanding of them. For this reason, programs need to work with those others to ensure the inclusion of people with disability as a priority in social planning. Approaches found useful include:

1. Provide various training activities to parents, volunteer CBR workers and local government officers. Approaches need to vary in style and content, and include hands-on study tours. This increases knowledge and awareness, which can motivate them to be more active in assisting children with disabilities.

2. Use local (not foreign) trainers where possible – not only because of their understanding of culture and context, but because their experience and capacity needs to be recognised and to ensure that learning is applied and retained locally.

3. Support the involvement of parents. Parents are often physically and mentally tired from constantly taking care of their children, and often give up hope that their children will improve.

4. Involve volunteers – encourage them to take leadership roles in the community. We should not just focus on families, as there is a need to broaden ownership of issues and support available to both the family and the child. The impact for the child may be limited if program impacts stay within the family.

5. Local authorities need to gain a good understanding of disability, as their cooperation on community initiatives is essential for any work to be done in Vietnam. Such support enables service development to take place that is in keeping with the Government's policy commitments to children in difficult circumstances. Grassroots activities (in this case, for the rights of children with disabilities) also have a much better chance when local, city and national-level persons are supportive.

6. With limited staff, agencies cannot be involved with each child. World Vision Vietnam highlighted what was possible by working with a few children who had potential to improve, then sharing these example/model cases with potential or actual CBR service providers. In this way, people can see the difference before and after the intervention, and consider some practical ways of assisting children with disabilities. This also helps them to see, not only in theory but in practice, that conditions for such children can improve by an effort within the community.

Cases – such as that of Huynh Tan Nghia in the text box – are written up and (with permission from children and the family) used as examples. Their stories and photographs are shared in target communities.

7. The project has used the World Health Organization CBR training manual, the handbook *Disabled Village Children* (David Werner, 1988), *Training in the Community for People with Disabilities* (WHO, 1989) and *Nothing About Us Without Us* (David Werner, 1998). The project has also created many new activities of its own making, as events warranted.

8. Integration is a primary aim. According to World Vision Vietnam CEDC specialist Dr Michael Hegenauer, who helped establish this project,

    *"It is not developing 'special services'; it is simply having the community and our development programs **include** children with disabilities in the activities that are already being delivered (health care, education, culture/leisure/play, child participation, etc.). Part of key learning here is that it's not that children with disabilities can't participate – it's that we don't let them participate... we don't even think about letting them participate."*

    Development agencies need to *intentionally* develop project designs, objectives, activities, indicators and benchmarks that engage this target group. Many project designs appear very weak in this area and in the Vietnamese context it has been critical to address this.

9. Sustainable impact is greatly enhanced when the project has the support of active partners. University involvement has been especially important: partnering with the University of Ho Chi Minh's Departments of Social Work and Women's Studies, for example, has led to exchanges on medical and psycho-social rehabilitation/CBR, and cultural aspects of disabilities. Exposure assists with training of students; it is here that the bright young people of a country can learn and get involved. It is here that research can be delivered and it's here that national policies can be developed or challenged. Agencies can influence, but when that NGO packs up and leaves or that donor stops giving, the

university and its graduates will still be there engaging with the local community. In short, NGOs "need to partner more with universities, making them part of our project design... they are a wonderful resource". [10]

The practices described in the CBR project are in keeping with key recommendations of the CAN study: [11]

- Families are supported in practical ways.

- Children with disabilities are increasingly included in the concept of community. The community becomes richer as it involves its disabled children. Attitudes and practices that are harmful to its most vulnerable members can be challenged and changed with tangible results.

- The participation of disabled children is encouraged, has an avenue and their views are heard as issues affecting them become recognised. Communities, local government and volunteer CBR workers together have started to organise social occasions (with project funds), such as a Tết (lunar new year) party and a Christmas party, to which all children are welcome – whereas before there were none for children who did not go to school (not only children with disabilities, but street children, and children without residence registration or a birth certificate).

- Links with the University have assisted with outcome-focused research.

- Changes in attitude and action have followed planned awareness-raising efforts where both the problem and the potential have been presented. This is important, as awareness-raising does not always move beyond the problem. If the potential for change is not presented when the attention of families or the broader community has been brought to an issue of social importance, there is a risk of apathy.

- Working with people in positions of power helps to gain support on child protection from local authorities. Projects need to actively inform and involve key figures in

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[10] Dr Michael Hegenauer, World Vision Vietnam

[11] Dorning, K, *Crying Out*, World Vision International, 2002

Vietnam

power to maximise the effectiveness of their activity. This observation has been noted in a study by UNICEF in 1994 [12] which found that urban projects that worked closely with people in power (such as the mayor's office) were more effective in protecting children than projects that did not.

- Potential can be demonstrated clearly of increased knowledge leading to action. Some of the local and district-level governments provided buildings to the project to use as "Children's Clubs." This is praiseworthy, as land is very limited in a place like District 8 in Ho Chi Minh City; that government provided a whole building (with ample space) indicates that they understand the value of children with disabilities (especially the intellectually disabled) having informal education.

- The CBR project maximises its effect through partnerships and volunteers. This increases local ownership of issues the project seeks to address, and children benefit from the added energy and interest volunteers bring to their roles. Capacity of the volunteer, project partner and World Vision alike is increased through the interaction, and through follow-up of issues that emerge.

Progress has been made through community-based rehabilitation so that Article 23 of the CRC has more meaning in District 8 in 2002 than it did in 1997. The question has moved from "what problem?" to how to respond.

Barriers to child protection and participation

- The project operational environment is a challenge, due to the many levels of permission needed from the Government to conduct a range of activities.

- Holding meetings with volunteers in Vietnam can be seen as "political" activity, and care was needed in the beginning. However, with greater awareness and momentum, meetings are easily organised. Discussion at community-level meetings, including debates between government officers and volunteers, is impressive. This is still limited to community level and has not happened at district level.

- Support for the intentional inclusion of children with disabilities in broader community development projects and activities is an ongoing internal barrier. These children are often forgotten; they are very much hidden, unable to leave their homes by themselves. Unless NGOs (including World Vision), volunteers and local governments actively enquire about the incidence and treatment of disability in-community, there is a risk that they will be excluded from development. We must all review our attention to these "invisible children".

- The involvement of volunteers is a greatly valued asset. However, it does raise concerns of adequate support. Better planning and policy regarding their duties and the hours involved would assist in giving opportunities for volunteer development and motivation, and should ensure that they are supported for as long as the program continues.

- The funding to develop community-based services for children (or people) with disability is often in the form of "special funded" government grants. These special grants can come with numerous rules, regulations, guidelines, benchmarks and indicators that must be pursued and reported on. Developing grassroots CBR services from scratch, however, is much more fluid – there are constantly new learnings, new circumstances, new opportunities presenting themselves, new activities needing to be developed. It can be enormously difficult for a creative and responsive program to meet inflexible donor requirements.

- Projects assisting children in especially difficult circumstances or children with disabilities need access to more flexible grants, or to alternative funding. They need greater access to long-term support funding mechanisms, such as child sponsorship.

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[12] Blanc, C S,et al., *Urban Children in Distress*, UNICEF, 1994

conclusion

"The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good [people] to do nothing."

    – Edmund Burke (British political philosopher) [1]

If this study has one underpinning message, it is that all members and levels of society have important roles to play in child protection, but we must act on them. This study has described examples of children, families, communities, local government and law enforcement bodies, civil society groups, NGOs and International Organisations and funding partners promoting the right of children to be protected from exploitation, abuse and neglect.

We must avoid an incomplete commitment that extends only to principle, not practice. When we know of the suffering that accompanies abuse, we cannot shut our eyes, or block our ears. A course of calculated action is needed even when that involves *"speaking truth to power"*. [2]

Building will for change

Approaches that build political will, challenge negative community attitudes or demonstrate alternatives are to be encouraged. It is important to base child protection efforts on a country's commitment to the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC). Expressed simply: if the will is there, action can follow.

Complicating factors such as conflict, poverty, discrimination and access have been highlighted in this report as barriers, but models to reduce their effects have been developed and in many cases have demonstrated impact. Barriers experienced have also created opportunities for research that has led to better understanding of the dimensions of problems and more effective advocacy and initiatives for change.

It is said that *"the price of liberty is eternal vigilance"*. The freedom of children from exploitation, abuse and neglect demands our best efforts to review, research and respond, to both current and new or emerging issues.

Building capacity for change

Actions and interventions at many levels can make a difference for children if they are designed with this as a consideration. Inclusion of priorities for children is needed as much in large-scale structural adjustment programs authored by international financial organisations as in local community development efforts. Commitment to child protection must be built into planning, human resource development, and action, to ensure rhetoric becomes reality.

To link the "micro", "meso" and "macro" aspects of child protection, promotion of change at different levels is needed. In most contexts, the mechanisms that already exist to respond to issues of child protection do not work as well as they could or should. Each of the countries covered by the study has structures that do or could promote child protection at national level; these structures offer opportunities for input and in many cases can be used or supported more than they currently are.

Approaches to child protection need to start with the **family**, which is or should be the point of primary support for the child. The **community** – local environments and wider relationships that form a backdrop for the growing child – also need to be engaged to play a more supportive role in child protection. **Government agencies and institutions** can become increasingly child-friendly, such as an education system incorporating the CRC into staff training and the general curriculum.

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[1] Quoted in Amnesty International, *Campaigning Manual*, 1997

[2] "Speak truth to power" was a challenge given to Friends (Quakers) in the 18th century, and became a resounding call during the 1950s civil rights movement in the USA.

conclusion

Agencies within **civil society**, **including NGOs**, often in collaboration with government, can promote a better deal for children not only in their own practices but through strategic involvements, partnerships, research and advocacy. Approaches are needed that further governmental action to promote child rights in practical ways through child-sensitive policing, law enforcement and social policy/practice reform. Advocacy has led to improved law enforcement, access, public policy and governance in some cases and contexts. **The corporate sector** also needs to be engaged and supported with respect to its application of child-friendly practices in a range of areas; as the UK's Foreign Secretary has noted: *"We must do what we can to encourage corporate responsibility… we cannot leave companies to regulate themselves globally any more than we can do in our own national economies."* [3]

Finally, focused interventions such as these need to be complemented with efforts to address root causes of child abuse and neglect.

To achieve impact on a broad level, child protection must be mainstreamed. Approaches that build on what is already known and can be shared on specific risks, incidents and successful actions, need greater documentation and dissemination so that child protection can genuinely be owned by all sectors of the community.

Celebrating success

The *resilience* of children and communities living in situations of stress and hardship has been emphasised in this study.

The principle of children being able to teach something to adults and to influence their own development is being tested in communities where there are structures that support children's involvement. Ideas from children have influenced provincial and national governments. Children have taken initiatives where others could only see barriers, and the outcomes have been improvements for children and community alike.

Children have travelled from lands of conflict and situations of difficulty to join with others in making their voice heard – as at the highly significant United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children. They return to their communities determined to take forward the challenge of promoting a safe world for children, and receive greater respect for their message:

"…until others accept their responsibility to us, we will fight for our rights. We have the will, the knowledge, the sensitivity and the dedication." [4]

Children are working for the present and the future. As adults, they will have the opportunity to further the cause of children in their families, communities and beyond.

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[3] UK Foreign Secretary Jack Straw, September 2001, as appears in *Globalisation and Child Rights: What Role for the Private Sector?* Save the Children UK, 2002

[4] *A World Fit for Us*, Children's Forum message at the UNGA Special Session on Children, 2002

Recommendations

All examples of useful practice detailed in the different chapters (especially under the "Useful approaches" headings) can be viewed as recommendations for change.

In addition, the following recommendations – which are clustered under the same headings as used in the CAN study – are targeted at those who implement or support programs to address children at risk. Emphasis is placed on practical ways to build on initiatives that are already active in many communities.

Project design supporting families and building community

- Recognise and support **the family** as the principal agent for the protection of children and the fulfilment of children's development and potential.

- Ensure that the concept of "community" includes **vulnerable or hidden members**.

- Promote **local ownership** of child protection and expectation/commitment for its implementation through partnerships, community organising and a broad range of involvements. Recognise that local concern about child protection already exists – it may just need resourcing and mobilising.

- Pursue effective application of **common principles of the CRC**, as these can give hope and value to children. Identify and engage on areas of priority, as reflected in the aspirations of children and as noted by the country mechanisms monitoring implementation of the CRC.

- Engage families and the community to **broaden** their **understanding** on issues affecting children by integrating activities with a clear social justice element. Include in program design provision and "space" to understand and influence **local attitudes** that restrict child development. [5]

  To mobilise community members on child protection, use **materials** that are effective and **meaningful** in the local context, highly visual and with easy to understand text. Ensure that the materials are linked to follow-up.

- Include as activities in program designs, specific strategies linked to child protection aims. Child protection responses should **prioritise prevention** efforts that reduce the violence children are subject to, increase access to and quality of education, and promote economic activity.

- Reach more children through **community-based rather than centre-based** prevention and early intervention programs.

- Identify practical child protection measures that will **maximise opportunities** to support, and counter constraints to, the implementation of local and national policy.

- In settings with highly mobile populations or problems of human trafficking, set indicators to monitor **mobility** as a push–pull factor that places children at risk.

- In **relief** efforts, include child protection as a key area of response alongside sectors such as health, education and shelter.

- In situations of recent, present or potential **conflict**, ensure that community development supports peace building and trust. Focus on processes, not only on outcomes, to ensure that any development initiative does not become a liability leading to further tension.

- Make active use of curricular tools that promote peace building and awareness of the CRC in schools; **education** has been highlighted as a key entry point to a community where children are marginalised and at risk.

- Increase **livelihood** options of families and children, to reduce the debilitating effects and risk factors of poverty.

- **Link project activities that seek to build social capital with existing community organisations and support their development**. Civil society goes beyond NGOs and includes groups such as churches, residents' associations and

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[5] For example, a common view in Indonesia is "more children, more benefit", but on the negative side, some parents do not think of the need for appropriate education and health care. Likewise, the Cambodian saying that "*children need to pay back the breast milk*" can be used to justify actions that place children at risk through hazardous labour. The LICADHO approach in Cambodia seeks to help parents to better differentiate between child labour and hazardous child labour.

recommendations

universities. Advocacy and development in the interests of increased child protection can be strengthened through collaboration; indeed, unless such linkages are part of project planning, NGO actions may harm independent grassroots initiatives that contribute to social capital. [6]

Child and youth participation

- Partner with children to support them in understanding and influencing their peers. Recognise, nurture and build on the **resilience** that children often display in extreme situations, which can be an asset to other children, families and community. Consider children's own capacity and potential to advocate, which may be present even when others fear to raise their voices.

- Invest to **better understand** factors that contribute to **resilience as well as risk** – and how these can be promoted to assist others and engage all children – not only those experiencing difficulty – more fully as part of the solution.

- At the same time, seek to strengthen institutions of education and health that **build children's capacity** to protect themselves and those around them, and to recover from trauma or injuries they have experienced as a result of abuse or exploitation.

- Support community-based **associations of children or young people** as vehicles for promoting greater community awareness and ownership of issues that hinder child protection or limit children's options. Promote safe gathering places for children as part of project designs. The World Bank has noted the value of linking with youth networks in promoting healthy behaviour.

- Encourage families, communities and community leaders to **support child participation**, which has been shown to increase child protection through increasing awareness of issues, standards and avenues of response.

- **Support children to work with community leaders** in defining avenues for action on the increasing concerns that are prompted by child participation.

- Ensure a strong link with **schools** as a strategy to increase child participation, in education and beyond.

- Recognise the importance of the **psychological and spiritual well-being** of children; cooperate with local initiatives that are addressing these in appropriate ways, including those that are faith-based. **Hope** of children, although a less tangible indicator, is a particularly valuable one, since hope brings energy for change; it is an investment in both today and tomorrow.

- Give greater attention to researching, documenting, translating and distributing **child-to-child** approaches and material as part of both program design and national child protection strategies.

- **Integrate specific measures**, such as rehabilitation for children with disabilities, into broader community development approaches, to ensure attention to children who are at a high risk of neglect.

Advocacy/partnerships

- Recognise the **structural or social** dimensions contributing to children being at risk, and seek to support change; for example, improved law enforcement is one important measure to protect children from abuse, exploitation and neglect.

- Actively **promote justice**. Positive change is achieved through initiatives where this is a principal aim, not only a guiding principle. It may be more effective for children for an agency to choose not to implement a specific program, opting instead for a strategic partnership, for example with human rights groups.

- At the community level, work in partnerships to promote **local investment** and local accountability for child protection.

- Develop **country-specific** training, which defines child exploitation and outlines avenues of response for NGOs and community members.

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[6] Fisher, J, 1998

- **Advocate** to every level of government for **policy** development in the best interests of children; for decisions and policies that support, not suppress, important grassroots initiatives for child protection.

- Consider the potential of government bodies, NGOs, the media, and cultural or faith-based groups to be **partners in changing attitudes** and reducing risks to children. As one example, education systems could incorporate the CRC into curriculum as a key mechanism for child development, and also into staff training.

- Develop and strengthen inter-agency **networking**, cooperation and partnerships, in order to bring out and extend the strengths of each agency's approach; address local child protection issues in ways that are not possible for a single agency to achieve; and build civil society. Experience shows the benefit of active coalitions working to address an issue of shared concern.

- **Invest** in research and development for the valuable return of new partnerships, products and skills.

- **Engage the corporate sector** to promote and pursue the application of child-friendly practices in a range of areas. To the degree that their presence and investment is valued by governments, foreign corporations can be an important influence on country policy and practice. Many corporations have ample resources to implement effective measures.

- Participate wherever possible in **national working groups**, in order to ensure that concerns emerging from field work are represented; ideally, have staff positions dedicated to promoting structural change and advocating from experience.

- Support **in-country structures** that are effective in linking NGOs with government and other actors on child protection, to promote further collaboration.

- Increase **collaboration with universities**, and national and regional coalitions (such as the Regional Working Group on Child Labour) to avoid duplication of research and address gaps in child protection.

- **Bridge the gap** between project-level responses and advocacy that impacts on lives locally, and responses and advocacy at the international level. [7] This may mean engaging in advocacy targeted at donors such as the World Bank and Asian Development Bank, or UN agencies such as UNICEF, UNESCO or the ILO.

- Get important **messages**, whether of good practice or emerging problems, into the **public arena**. One aspect of globalisation is the increased availability, speed and influence of information. Initiatives that work well to address child protection in one setting can, if communicated in a timely and accessible way, influence program designs in other districts, countries and regions.

Human capacity development

Organisations active in development have a key role (and responsibility) in promoting child protection in their areas of operation and influence. To this end, capacity building for staff and partners on child development, protection and responses has been an expressed need across the countries of this study.

- Invest in capacity building of staff, counterparts, community members and children. **All** are important.

- Implement training in **core competencies** for staff and counterparts on child development, child protection and local/international laws/mechanisms that protect children. Ensure the thorough implementation of organisational child protection policies through adequate financial and human resource allocation.

- Provide training and resources to equip program staff to **analyse information from projects** and use this to effectively advocate through national, regional or international forums on issues of child protection. Increased localisation, scale of operational area and increased reporting requirements from donors warrant **systematised training** resources that are responsive to local contexts and needs.

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[7] *Every Girl Counts*, World Vision, 2001

recommendations

- **Emerging issues**, many of which come to attention through community development activity, require response. However, many NGO staff face the choice of taking this on as an additional task when they are already overstretched, or alternatively, ignoring an issue of exploitation. Neither scenario is appropriate.

- Support **improved project documentation** systems so that key information can be made available to both internal and external audiences. Approaches to documentation are needed that allow staff to readily track changes over time and to be able to contribute to external advocacy.

- Build capacity in research that incorporates **child-centred approaches**, so as to gather quality data from the perspective of children. It has been noted in ILO studies on child labour that the unit of analysis is usually an adult concern such as the family or the school, but children's own perceptions and opinions must be taken into account.

- Provide **specialised technical assistance** to operational offices, such as through short-term placements to assist research, analysis and planning. This was an expressed need of some agencies interviewed for this study.

Outcome-focused evaluation and research

- Develop **local indicators** on child protection, to be used in outcome-focused research.

- **Make links** between project activities and child-focused indicators, to better measure which interventions improve quality of life for children. One clear indicator used in Cambodia is increased education access, but other links are possible, such as a gender focus on advocacy on local child protection issues; income-generating/micro-enterprise activity and quality of life improvements; or

links between alcoholism and domestic violence that affects children, as in Sri Lanka.

- Conduct studies that move beyond the immediate and give **longer-term data** on issues affecting children. Research emerging issues, document incidents and responses, and monitor impact over time, making the information available to concerned parties.

- Base evaluation and research on **strategic child protection priorities** identified by country reports on implementation of the CRC. Such research may be designed and implemented in partnership with others, and result in published papers that include perspectives from fieldwork.

- Through strategic research on child protection, **develop pilot projects/ models** that can be scaled up and applied in other countries.

- **Document successful processes and outcomes** from civil society or NGO practice in promoting child protection, to allow these approaches to be adapted in other settings and models to emerge; these may be more likely to result in support from authorities and/or donors.

- Gain further understanding of specific risks to children and impacts of interventions through **joint research**, including in partnership with universities.

- Pay attention to monitoring, analysis and strategic use of information from projects that seek **"less visible" structural changes**. Information emerging from such projects may have significant influence and impact on practice that promotes child protection.

- Research and monitor issues affecting children in order to **support advocacy** on law enforcement or social sector reform for child protection. Advocacy is strengthened and made more relevant to grassroots development, by clear examples and systematic data collection.

National and international level responses

Few of the above recommendations can succeed without support from critical national and international actors.

NGOs such as World Vision can view as part of their role the extension of the practical role of governance in key areas of protection, prevention and development. However, it must be kept in mind that states bear primary responsibility to protect children; private sector and civil society activity should not be seen as supplanting the role of states.

At the same time, national governments that are willing to promote child protection must also be able to count on the support of international actors. International institutions seeking to direct economic policy, promote good governance or improve the rule of law in countries should ensure that children benefit from these measures.

The following recommendations are addressed not only to national governments but to donors, policy makers and other international actors:

- Ensure the **CRC** is incorporated into staff training and general programs. Be willing to consider creative approaches that may contribute to promoting child protection.

- Review existing processes and policies that may be **restricting** the capacity of people and institutions for change.

- Support improvement in national government policy by **allocating resources** to enable its implementation and honour its intention. For example, provide adequate resources to strengthen the mechanisms of protection for children through increased law enforcement or awareness-raising in schools.

- **Invest in research, strategic collaboration and advocacy**, which may be most effective in the long term in reducing risks to children, and has the added value of promoting civil society and responsive government. Collaboration also helps to avoid duplication.

- Invest in understanding and planning for **emerging issues**. Given the increasing urbanisation in Asia, for example, greater attention is warranted to research and respond to emerging child protection issues of urban poor communities. [8]

- Ensure that overseas development assistance (ODA) provides **adequate resources** to specifically assist children at risk, through policies and targeted programmes.

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[8] *Social Protection Strategy*, Asian Development Bank, 2001

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Further information on resources by David Werner is available from http://www.healthwrights.org ("HealthWrights is a non-profit organisation committed to advancing the health, basic rights, social equality, and self-determination of disadvantaged persons and groups. We believe that health for all people is only possible in a global society where the guiding principles are sharing, mutual assistance, and respect for cultural and individual differences.")

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appendix 1

Online toolkit

The following tools and resources supporting child protection and participation were not included in this publication due to space considerations, however they have been compiled as a separate "Toolkit" Appendix on the World Vision International website http://www.childrencampaign.org.

ADP Strategy, World Vision Sri Lanka

The Bohol Children's Code, Bohol Province, Philippines, 2000

Cambodia survey tool (developed for the research conducted in Cambodia on the impact of child participation on child protection), 2002

Child Protection Policy, World Vision Development Foundation, Philippines, August 2000

Children at Risk: Cambodia Study (full text), World Vision Cambodia, 2001

Children's Club Activity Modules 1 & 2, World Vision Cambodia, 2001

Getting Children's Participation: An experience in establishment of community Children's Youth Development Clubs, World Vision Cambodia, 2002

IEC Child Protection Tools, Child Welfare Group and Inter-Agency projects, Cambodia

The LICADHO Child Labour Matrix and Community Mobilisation Tool, LICADHO, Cambodia, 2001

The Sri Lankan Children's Challenge, Report, Save the Children, Sri Lanka, 2002

Summary of *Police Procedure Manual for responding to the Sexual Exploitation of Children*, LEASEC, Ministry of the Interior, Cambodia, 2001

Understanding and Investigating Child Sexual Exploitation, Ministry of the Interior Inter-Agency projects, Royal Government of Cambodia, 2000

World Vision Partnership Policy and Required Standards on Child Protection

appendix 2

World Vision Partnership Child Protection Policy (summary)

World Vision Child Protection Standards were issued in January of 2000 and were based on Guidelines on Child Protection which had been introduced five years earlier. World Vision developed and distributed the standards as a means of reducing the risk to sponsored and non-sponsored children in World Vision projects from any form of abuse or neglect, including sexual abuse.

Each office is responsible for the development and implementation of child protection policies and standards. The policies, while consistent with the Partnership policy, must also reflect laws of the country in which each World Vision entity operates. Taking into consideration the local context, each office's child protection policy and standards must include:

1. **Awareness raising:** While the policy guidelines acknowledge that "the majority of sexual abuse takes place within the family and community", emphasis is placed on raising awareness of staff, board members and volunteers in the definition of exploitation, abuse (IN ALL FORMS) and neglect.

2. **Programme planning:** An assessment of the circumstances of children is to be incorporated into all baseline surveys, along with availability of local childcare professionals as community resources and support services. From the assessment of both vulnerabilities of children and resources available, World Vision plans programs to prevent child abuse and plans for rehabilitation for children who have been abused. In all stages of programme planning and implementation, children are to be involved, recognising that the responsibility lies with adults.

3. **Guidelines for recruiting and screening of personnel:** Guidelines set out strict procedures for screening of employees, board of director/advisory council candidates, volunteers and interns. Police checks are routinely required for staff, board members and volunteers where this is permissible by local law.

4. **Behaviour protocols:** Behaviour protocols are rules of appropriate and proper behaviour to protect both children from abuse and staff from false accusations of inappropriate behaviour or abuse.

5. **Allegation/incident management plan:** Guidelines set out an effective reporting procedure and response plan for handling any allegations or suspicions of alleged misconduct toward children.

6. **Protection of children in sponsorship programs:** Recognising that children become exposed either directly or indirectly to external entities through sponsorship, strict guidelines are set for the management of sponsor relations, children's photos, and all information relating to the child.

7. **Visits to World Vision projects:** While acknowledging the importance of field visits by supporters and others, strict rules for both the Support Office and National offices reflect national and local sensitivities with the aim to prevent abuse or inappropriate behaviour by a visiting sponsor.

8. **Advocacy:** All World Vision offices' policies are to include plans to be involved in community, national and regional activities to promote the rights of children and seek their protection. They are encouraged to develop and support policy and research capacities that seek to change structures and systems that jeopardise the rights of children, especially girl children.

9. **Communication about children:** Communication about children should reflect images that are decent and respectful, not presenting them as victims. Special care must be given to protect children's identities and geographic locations.

10. **General confidentiality:** Emphasis is placed on maintaining confidentiality of any person involved while cases are under investigation by the appropriate management or Crisis Management Team.

11. **Partner organisations:** World Vision's Child Protection Policies and Standards apply to partner organisations involved in providing services to children and agreements are established accordingly.

appendix 3

Some principles of World Vision's Area Development Program (ADP) approach

Area Development Programs:

- are based on a vision shared by communities, the program teams and other key stakeholders
- are focused on larger areas and on contiguity of the communities
- create sustainable alternatives that empower people to address both "micro" (such as income generation activity) and "macro" (such as contributing to understanding of and steps to reduce poverty) issues
- prioritise children and other vulnerable groups
- are involved in a phased manner over a prolonged period of time (e.g. 10–15 years)
- uphold and promote grassroots-level initiatives and ensure ownership and participation by the community, and understanding of a community's own role in development. [1]
- facilitate collaborative partnerships and networks with grassroots-level community organisations, government bodies, other NGOs and donors
- through partnership, influence change in the best interests of children and lead to increased options for the poor [2]
- seek to enable the poor to effectively access and utilise external and internal resources to address issues of poverty and injustice facing their communities.

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[1] Refer to the explanation of World Vision's "transformational development" approach, in the section **Empowering Communities**, in the Introduction to this report.

[2] *Ibid*.

World Vision