

Minutes

Child Rights Working Group Meeting

Date: July 13, 2006

Venue: Plan in Vietnam

Chair: Ms. Deepali Khanna

Participants: 22 (see the attached list)

1. Introduction of participants and opening

- A short opening statement from Deepali Khanna, Country Director, Plan in Vietnam.
- All participants introduced
- Main purpose of meeting: a discussion on the initiative of forming a Child Rights working group.

2. Brainstorming on Existing Working Groups (WGs)

- Different organizations such as UNICEF, SCS, Plan in Vietnam, and others have worked together in the past. Those organizations cooperated on certain activities but there remains a lack of follow-up activities as well as a focal point person/organization for coordinating and systematic functioning.
- A children's discussion group was established some years ago in HCMC but the focus was on issues specifically affecting street children in HCMC. We require a Child Rights INGO WG with a much wider scope.
- Other existing WGs include HIV/AIDS, Early Childcare Development, Child Friendly Schools (Ethnic Minority Working Group), Microfinance, etc.
- There are currently 12 WGs working under the NGO Resource Centre. Together, they share information, experiences, and lessons learned (when working in the same sector) for better results and further development of their goals.
- The Microfinance WG is a good example with a lot of lessons learned.
- With regard to Vietnamese local NGOs, these have had some joint activities and studies in cooperation with other institutes, in the past. However, this cooperation applies only to specific cases.

3. Discussion on forming a Working Group (WG)

- It is good initiative to have this working group
- The concern raised by UNICEF is whether this new Child Rights WG will be an informal or formal group, and whether or not it can be named "forum" instead of "working group". The point is that for formal groups, legal processes for establishment may present difficulties.
- Up to now, the 12 current WGs under the NGO Resource Centre (NGROC) are informal groups, as NGROC does not possess legal functions. This group will follow the same structure and mechanism. Thus, the question of legal processes for establishment is not a problem.

4. The name of the Working Group (WG) and its functions

- The name of the WG was discussed through much of the meeting.
- Calling the group NGO Child Rights Working Group or Child Rights Working Group was discussed. As this WG will join with the existing NGO Resource Centre (NGORC) structure, it is preferable to name it an NGO Working Group.

- The advantage of putting this WG under the structure of NGORC is that it will open it to the existing network of UN agencies, INGOs, and LNGOs to join in. Participation will be wider and more flexible.
- “Child Rights” seems to be a broad issue and there were suggestions for sub-groups within it for more specific issues.
- Fears expressed regarding the word “rights”:
- The word “rights” connotes legal issues rather than the creation of a safe environment for children. However, as suggested by WHO, the term “rights” in this context does not refer merely to legal issues but to a much broader meaning. We do not want to limit the understanding of this term to solely legal issues, but want to work towards creating a safe environment for children.
- The word “rights” may cause discomfort to local people, LNGO and government offices. However, the representatives from LNGO (CEFACOM) agreed that “child rights” is now familiar and understood by most of the local people. In Vietnamese language, it is acceptable.
- There are a lot of networks such as UN groups Save the Children Alliance, etc. but we need to be more open to share information and really identify key issues affecting children. This group will fill the gap between UN, INGO and LNGO. Thus we can assist the government in implementing the CRC. Government offices (CPFC) can be involved in this working group.
- Regarding the guidelines for this WG, we can refer to the Microfinance Working Group guidelines and draft out guidelines for this group based on them. (Lan from Plan in Vietnam will take the draft from NGORC)

5. Draft TOR and comments from participants

- Plan in Vietnam has prepared a draft TOR for the Child Rights Working group. All participants were asked to spend some time to look at it, provide comments and send back to Plan in Vietnam.

6. Conclusions

- The name of the group will be: Child rights Working Group.
- The TOR for group: to be consolidated by Plan in Vietnam and sent to all participants for inputs.
- Mailing list: Ms. Thu Ha (NGORC) will help in creating a mailing list for the group as well as one page on the NGORC website for the group’s introduction. www.ngocenter.org

7. Presentation by SCUK on OPSC

- Viet Nam has signed the optional protocol on Sale of children, Child Prostitution, Children in armed conflict in 2003. In November, 2005 the Vietnames Government submit the first report on the progress of implementation of the protocol.
- In December 2005, the Child rights Committee in Geneva asked NGOs in Viet Nam to send a independent report on the progress on optional protocol’s implementation in Viet Nam. SCS together with Plan, SCUK, Oxfarm, CEFACOM, Care, CSAGA has jointly prepare supplemental report for the Government’s one. The report has been sent to the CRC Committee in April.
- On 9 June, the CRC committee in Geneva invited representatives from NGOs in Vietnam for a meeting regarding the Optional Protocol on child prostitution, pornography, trafficking and children in armed conflict in Geneva. . SCUK represented NGOs together with one lawyer in HCMC has presentations and a Q&A section for the committee. Ms. Julie – Unicef also has a separate presentation to CRC Committee.
- The main issue presented by SCUK includes: law and law enforcement, child participation, coordination, social work, information and contributing factors, etc.

- The CRC Committee in Geneva gave feedback and asked questions for the Vietnamese government to answer in its report in September 2006
- Early July 2006, CPFC hosted a meeting with other ministries (MOLISA, Ministry of Culture and Information, Ministry of Justice, MOFA) and SCUUK to get input for the response to the questionnaires raised by CRC Committee. The meeting focused on answering the questions posed by the CRC Committee in Geneva.
- CPFC said that they would have liked to invite more NGOs but time constraints prevented them from doing so. Miscommunication also prevented these organizations from receiving invitations or information. The need for a Working Group for information and support for the government is essential.
- CPFC gave draft answers and requested NGOs for inputs or feedback before 27 July. The CPFC final report must be sent to Geneva by mid-August, with a meeting and a presentation by the Vietnamese government following in September. SCUUK shared the document with all participants.
- Conclusion: If NGOs have any feedback, please send to Lan (Plan in Vietnam) so we may consolidate and send to VCPFC.

8. Other suggestions:

- The working group can jointly support an event named "A Day for Children in Viet Nam". Potential dates include the Mid-Autumn Festival, International Children's Day, and Child Rights Day (19th November).
- A potential topic of discussion for the next meeting is Child Protection measures, so organizations may share their unique knowledge/experiences. (The website Keepingchildrensafe-org.uk is a good resource for this topic, and contains a book named "Keeping Children Safe Toolkit").

9. Next meeting

Date and Time: 18 August, 2006, at 9:00 -11:00 am.

Venue: NGO resource centre, La Thanh Hotel.

The tentative agenda will sent by Plan two weeks prior to the meeting (all participants also asked to suggest possible themes

Participants:

No.	Name	Organization	No.	Name	Organization
1	Deepali Khanna	Plan in Vietnam	12	Le Quynh Lan	Plan in VN
2	Peter van Dommelen	Plan in Vietnam	13	Pham Thi Xuan Linh	RaFH
3	Vu Tuan Minh	UNICEF	14	Nguyen Huong Giang	SCUK
4	Margrit Schlosser	Terredes hommes Foundation	15	Sara De Hovre	WHO
5	Le Ba Quynh	Oxfam QB	16	Laren Lo	Independent researcher
6	Luu Ngoc Anh	Oxfam QB	17	Pham Que Anh	CEFACOM
7			18	Nguyen Thi An	CEFACOM
8	Phan Thu Ha	NGO Resource centre	19	Nguyen Thi Hoang Yen	SCS
9	Luong Duy Phuong	GEDA	20	Nguyen Thi Minh Chau	COHED
10	Nguyen Phuong Thao	GEDA	21	Trieu Kieu Van	Plan in Vietnam
11	Hoang Hong Nga	GEDA	22	Vu Thi Tuyet Mai	Plan in Vietnam