

# INGO DISCUSSION GROUP – HO CHI MINH CITY

## CHILD RIGHT'S WORKING GROUP

MEETING 30<sup>th</sup> September 2008 @ 9:00AM

At the office of Terre des hommes Foundation - Lausanne

### Draft Minutes of the meeting

#### Present:

Paul Finnis	Saigon Children's Charity (Chair)
Kirsten Theuns	Education Fort Development
Ms. Phan Trang	Children's Home Society & Family Services
Mr. Tran Minh Hai	HCWF Tuong Lai Project
Mr. Ngo Van Cuong	HEKS Switzerland
Ms. ... Tam	HEKS Switzerland
Mr. Tran Cong Binh	UNICEF
Mr. Le Quang Nguyen	Save the Children US
Margrit Schlosser	Terre des hommes - Lausanne
Ms. Nguyen Thi Duy Huong	Terre des hommes - Lausanne
Ms. Nguyen Thi Thanh	Terre des hommes - Lausanne

#### Agenda:

- 1 Review of Minutes from Meeting on 15.07.08; Follow up
- 2 Finalise Vietnamese version of Terms of Reference
- 3 Inter-country adoption: Input provided by Ms. Phan Trang, Country Representative of Children's Home Society & Family Services
- 4 Mapping (matrix) of key activities of HCMC CRWG member organisations
- 5 Action Guidelines
- 6 Child Protection
- 7 Education – definition of key issues
- 8 Any other business

Margrit Schlosser welcomed everybody and opened the meeting with a round of introductions. She welcomed in particular Ms. Phan Trang who had kindly agreed to talk about her organisation's activities related to inter-country adoptions.

#### **1 Review of Minutes from Meeting on 15.07.08; Follow up**

Minutes from the last meeting were discussed and agreed, with thanks expressed to the minutes taker.

It was observed that certain actions to be taken and written in the minutes had not been taken in follow up of the previous meeting of the group. The actions that need to be followed up as well as core agenda items of the September meeting are highlighted in bold in the present minutes.

## **2 Finalising the Vietnamese version of the Terms of Reference**

**Action:** It was agreed that those who have **comments and/or suggestions for changes in the wording of the Vietnamese translation of the ToR** would send an e-mail message to Ms. Ngoc Anh at SCC [ngocanh@saigonchildren.com], with cc. to Paul Finnis [pf@saigonchildren.com].

## **3 Inter-country adoption**

Children's Home Society & Family Services (CHSFS) is a US organisation founded in 1889 with a mission to provide homes for children who had none. Ms. Phan Trang, who is the Country Representative informed about the organisation's status in Vietnam, being registered with and licensed by PACCOM as well as by the Department on Inter-country Adoption of the Ministry of Justice. She also talked about the organisations' activities in particular in Vietnam: Humanitarian support on one hand and inter-country adoptions on the other hand (50:50 of the budget). The organisation is active in four provinces of the Mekong Delta, namely Vinh Long, Benh Tre, Kien Giang and An Giang, and works also in Binh Thuan.

With regard to the general situation of inter-country adoptions in Vietnam and the on-going debate it is interesting to note that among the more than 40 US adoption agencies that have been working in Vietnam only about half of them are actually "approved Hague Adoption Service Providers".

[For further information see the following link:

[http://travel.state.gov/family/adoption/convention/convention\\_4169.html](http://travel.state.gov/family/adoption/convention/convention_4169.html).]

Recently, the US Government has decided that adoption service providers that are not approved will no longer be allowed to conduct "home studies" of couples/families who want to adopt a child to the US. Therefore, these denied adoption agencies will not be able to carry out adoption work.

However, the possibility of "private adoptions" still exists (as is the case for Switzerland for instance).

It is CHSFS's policy not to collaborate and work with any Hague denied adoption agencies.

## **4 Mapping of key activities of HCMC CRWG member organisations**

**Action:** Paul has offered to work on a **matrix** and send it to the member organisations. Margrit will send Paul the matrix of the Hanoi CRWG.

## **5/6 Action Guidelines – Child Protection**

Action guidelines and child protection are closely linked together, as we all feel that we should focus on action and not just on words or more paper.

"We are looking for a set of 'guiding principles' that we can all share." These should then also be shared with our partners, other actors and stakeholders, in order to encourage them to adopt child protection policies of their own.

It is decided to discuss the issues related to child protection at the next meeting of the CRWG.

**Action:** Those organisations that do have a **child protection policy** to send the respective documents to Paul Finnis/Saigon Children's Charity. Paul and Margrit will prepare the content of the next meeting (possibly with the collaboration of Nguyen from SC and Binh from UNICEF).

## 7 **Education – Definition of key issues**

As we were running out of time and the topic of the next meeting (child protection policies) had been decided, Margrit suggested postponing the discussion on key issues to a later meeting.

## 8 **Any other business**

- Hai from HCWF was the only representative of a local association.  
**Action:** Participants agreed that we should try to **mobilise more people from local associations, partners, projects**, such as:
  - Social Work Centre (→?)
  - Street Educators' Club (→ Binh?)
  - The Social Work Café (→ Margrit)
  - Association for the Protection of Child Rights (Mme Thu and Mme Mai)\*
  - Department of Child Protection of DoLISA (Mme Phan Thanh Minh)\*
  - Legal Aid Centre (→ Tdh)

\* SCC and Tdh as co-chairs of the CRWG should write invitation letters.

- In order to include colleagues and representatives from local associations, partners and projects, we need to **ensure translation at the meetings**.  
**Action:** Cuong from HEKS knows a former Care staff who works part-time and who might be willing to take over this job. SCC offers to cover the costs.
- The Complementary Report to the Third and Fourth Periodical Country Report on Vietnam's Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 2002 – 2007 is currently being finalised by a sub-group of the Hanoi CRWG. Feedback from the HCMC CRWG on the 4th draft has been well received and acknowledged.
- Binh from UNICEF mentions a *Decree on Child Protection* by the Prime Minister, which should be issued soon. It is based on a suggestion by MoLISA.

**Next meeting:** Kirsten from Education for Development kindly agreed to host the next meeting, which is scheduled on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2008, at 09.00 hours. Main topic will be: Child Protection – Child Protection Policy.

The EfD office is located at: 305/30 Le Van Sy, Ward 1, Tan Binh District.