

**Ho Chi Minh City Child Rights Working Group**  
**Nhóm Hoạt động Quyền Trẻ em Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh**

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**Meeting 13<sup>th</sup> of November 2009, at 9.00 hours,**  
**at the offices of Ho Chi Minh City Child Welfare Foundation**

(85/ 65 Phạm Viết Chánh, Ward 19, Bình Thạnh district, Ho Chi Minh City).

**MINUTES**

**1) Welcome and thanks, round of introduction**

Johanna Risse (Terre des hommes Foundation Lausanne), co-chair of the group, welcomes all the participants and thanks Ho Chi Minh City Child Welfare Foundation for hosting the meeting at its offices. She also thanks everyone for taking the time to participate in this meeting. A round of introduction is made. See list of participants for those present.

**2) Game to reach a common understanding of what is Child Protection and Child Protection Policy and why it is important + debriefing.**

Participants are split into 4 groups, each receiving some secret instructions.

One group has to tie balloons to the ankles of its members and try to keep the balloons from being popped. The 2<sup>nd</sup> group has to protect the people with the balloons, preventing the balloons from being popped, using any strategy they want.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> group receives the instruction to run towards group 1 and pop as many balloons as possible, using any means they want.

The 4<sup>th</sup> group is told to watch what is happening and keep track of time.

The game starts. In a few minutes, all balloons but one are popped.

A debriefing is done about the feelings of participants from each group.

Group 1: frightened; couldn't distinguish who was attacking them and who was protecting them

Group 2: still discussing; caught unprepared; surprised; couldn't protect the person because attackers seemed to have a plan

Group 3: satisfied; efficient; feel powerful; attack was easier at the beginning, when all were unprepared; easy to pop the balloons using pens

Group 4: stressed; didn't know if could intervene

This game illustrates the challenges of child protection:

Group 1 represents children who need protection.

Group 2 represents adults who are doing their best to protect children.

Group 3 represents those adults who have no regard for child rights and therefore abuse children in many ways or those who allow children to be more vulnerable because of their ignorance.

Group 4 represents those people who watch and do nothing and who may want to do something but don't know how.

What can one learn from that game?

- Organisations are better protected with a system in place.

→ One never knows when something is going to happen, so it's better to be prepared.

→ Children are better protected when protectors work as a team.

→ Each one needs to know what is happening, the roles of each person and what the rules are with transparent procedures

→ Some children have the skills to protect themselves but some don't. They need to know how to protect themselves but they are not responsible for it, adults are.

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As a transition to the next subject, it is worth noting that even member organisations can individually set up a protection system within their organisation, with measures in place (code of conduct for staff, visitors' guidelines, recruitment procedures etc.). But for the protection system to be comprehensive, everyone needs to be able to report cases to relevant structures (police, child protection unit etc.).

In order to have an efficient reporting framework with contact persons at various levels, it might be interesting to work together as a group towards this goal.

### ***3) UNICEF shares about its work on Child Protection systems in the community. This is followed by a discussion on possible areas of collaboration with the group.***

Mr Tran Cong Binh, in charge of Child protection at UNICEF made a presentation about UNICEF's work in Vietnam, in particular on the child protection systems in the community. The Power Point presentation is available for download at the following address: <http://www.ngocentre.org.vn/content/hcmc-crwg-meeting-13-11-09-unicef-presentation-its-work>

A discussion follows regarding the possibilities for the group to collaborate or to play a role in the work of UNICEF for a better protection of children.

Some suggestions are made but no specific point is agreed on, especially as the work of UNICEF in HCMC for a provincial child friendly programme is only starting and the focal point at DoLISA has not been approved yet. UNICEF will keep the group updated on the programme's development and on whether there is room for collaboration.

Margrit Schlosser from Terre des hommes Foundation mentions a research done by UNICEF and MoLISA called "Creating a protective environment for children in Vietnam: an assessment of child protection laws and policies, especially children in special circumstances in Vietnam". The fact that it is done by both an INGO and a government ministry makes it a very useful tool to use for issues related to child protection. This document is available for download at the following link: <http://www.ngocentre.org.vn/content/creating-protective-environment-children-viet-nam-assessment-child-protection-laws-and-polic>

### ***4) Define a direction of work for the group***

The participants are invited to look back at what had been decided during the previous meetings of the CRWG. 1<sup>st</sup>, the group decided to work on Child Protection and had an introduction on the subject with the toolkit "Keeping Children Safe", then today's meeting gives a broader perspective with the contribution from UNICEF. The next step should be that participants look at their own organisations and see how they can make them a more secure place for children.

Ms Thach Ngoc Yen, working for the Counselling desk for children in HCMC, informed the group of a meeting held by DoLISA regarding a Child Protection Unit. She offered to share the outcome of the meeting during next CRWG meeting.

It was also suggested that members of the group share their child protection policy or procedures. It was stressed that some smaller organisations do not have the necessary resources to put in place such measures on their own. This group could be a place to share such resources.

In order to have a better overview of the state of advancement of all member organisations, a simple survey will be circulated among the participants in the coming weeks.

Do Thi Thanh Huyen, working for UNICEF office in HCMC, suggested that the group participants should enhance their capacity in child protection in order to become "resource persons" who can provide support or advice on child protection issues to organisations/agencies who have the need.

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Paul Finnis, working for SCC, suggested that the group should agree on a statement on Child Protection or some clear principles that each organisation is willing to commit to. This will have the advantage that whenever one of the organisation is asked about Child Protection by media for example, it can speak not only on its own behalf, but also on behalf of the Child Rights Working Group. This should be taken up during next meeting.

**5) Next steps**

Ho Chi Minh City Child Welfare Foundation is warmly thanked for hosting the meeting.

It is noted that, as the organisation is child-focused and the place is very comfortable, it would be particularly appreciated if HCMC CRWG could hold its meetings again here next time. The group would give a contribution to cover the resulting costs.

Madam Thuan, chairwoman of the Foundation, says that the Foundation is happy to help, as long as the room is not in use.

The next meeting will take place on **January 14<sup>th</sup> 2010, 9am** at **Ho Chi Minh City Child Welfare Foundation**, 85/ 65 Phạm Việt Chánh, Ward 19, Bình Thạnh district, Ho Chi Minh City.

An invitation to the meeting with the agenda will be sent to the group in January 2010.

The 2 following points from the agenda were not covered for lack of time.

5) Agree on a set of general principles regarding Child Protection that all members can commit to. (Some examples on [www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk](http://www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk) )

6) Sharing on current issues, concerns, problems and information in plenary.

Ho Chi Minh City / Johanna Risse / 26/01/2010