Case Studies in East Asia

TOWARDS EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

EMPOWERING GIRLS THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS IN EDUCATION

East Asia and Pacific Regional UNGEI

GIRLS TOO! EDUCATION FOR ALL UNGEI

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The United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) is the Education For All flagship for girls' education and the principal movement to narrow the gender gap in primary and secondary education, and to ensure that by 2015, all children everywhere will be able to complete primary schooling, and that by then, girls and boys will have equal access to all levels of education.

UNGEI works through partnerships with organizations committed to these goals at global, regional, and country levels. To learn more about UNGEI, visit www.ungei.org.

Preface

2006 marked an important missed deadline in the timeline set by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the commitment to Education for All (EFA) – gender parity in primary and secondary education by 2005 – remained unrealized. What is particularly disheartening is that this was a realistic deadline and a reachable goal, especially in the East Asia and Pacific region, where steady progress towards universal primary education has been made. Even in countries which are close to achieving gender parity in primary enrolment, not all children who have access to school complete the cycle and proceed to the secondary level. In fact, there are still 60 million children in the region who are not enrolled in secondary school.[1] Further, the spirit of the goal – gender equality and empowerment for girls as well as boys – is a long way from realization.

Access to quality basic education is especially challenging for certain disadvantaged groups, including girls, children coming from extremely poor situations, ethnic minorities, migrants, children with disabilities, working children, and children without proper registration and documentation. These children are vulnerable to various social exploitations and are often denied their right to education. It is for this reason that the Regional United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) for East Asia and the Pacific came together to publish good practice case studies from the region. These examples highlight stories of overcoming the exploitation of girls and reaching vulnerable or marginalized girls.

Since its launch in May 2002, the East Asia and Pacific Regional UNGEI has sought to establish networks and partnerships among experts and organizations promoting gender equality in education. The goal of the regional group is to ensure the availability of quality education for all girls and boys across the region. The group works within the framework of the MDGs, the Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All, the Beijing Platform for Action and the World Fit for Children. Partner organizations at the regional level as of March 2007 include: Baha'i International Community; Education Development Center (EDC); International Labour Organization (ILO) Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific; Oxfam Great Britain; Plan Asia Regional Office; Save the Children Sweden, Southeast Asia and the Pacific Regional Office; Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) Secretariat; Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) Regional Support Team Asia Pacific; United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP); United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau for Education; United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) East Asia and Pacific Regional Office; and World Vision Foundation of Thailand.

This publication could not be completed without close collaboration and inputs from our country partners, particularly from Cambodia, China, Indonesia, and the Philippines, as well as from the authors of individual cases. Peer reviews and editing were provided by EDC, ILO, Plan Asia, UNESCO, UNICEF and their partners at various levels. The Regional UNGEI members extend their sincere appreciation to all who were involved in these extensive processes.

East Asia and Pacific Regional UNGEI Group

[1] UNICEF/UNGEI, *Gender Achievements and Prospects in Education: The Gap Report Part I, (2005).*

Contents

Introduction

This publication is a joint-project outcome by the regional and country United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) partners. The document introduces seven good practice case studies from East Asia on programmes addressing the educational needs of girls, particularly those who are marginalized for economic, cultural, social or other reasons. The two main themes for this report – overcoming girls' exploitation and reaching marginalized girls – were identified as major challenges to achieving quality basic education for all in the region. Seven good practice cases that directly address these challenges were nominated and developed by the regional and country UNGEI members and their associates. Field visits and studies were conducted in 2006 in Cambodia, China, Indonesia and the Philippines.

These cases share our regional experiences on girls' education with a wider audience and attempt to serve as both a technical learning source and as an advocacy tool for practitioners, policy makers and other stakeholders at all levels. It is our hope that readers will identify relevant critical strategies and draw lessons learned from these case studies, and ultimately work to apply them into their future programming.

Each case study features specific innovative aspects in programming for girls' education, and describes the contexts, programme contents, planning and implementation processes, programme and outcome analysis to date, lessons learned and potential replicability. The cases particularly focus on describing the overall programming processes, including partnership building for sustainability, the important elements of good practice.

The specific features of the case studies are as follows:

Overcoming Girls' Exploitation		
Case Study	**Key Strategies**	**Innovations**
Preventing child trafficking and exploitation through education *Cambodia*	■ Girls participate in activities to develop critical thinking skills that prepare them to make informed decisions. ■ Combine interventions to keep girls in school, such as community peer support, scholarships, life skills enhancement, and provision of food supplements for families. ■ For out-of-school girls, combine interventions such as community peer support, literacy training, life skills and livelihood skills enhancement, provision of food supplements for families and establishing a savings group. ■ Work through existing structures for sustainability.	■ Focus on education as a preventive strategy against exploitation of girls, rather than rescue and rehabilitation. ■ Establish community peer support to encourage girls' education. ■ Balance practical skills knowledge such as health, HIV/AIDS and agricultural skills, and empowerment skills such as self-confidence, problem solving and team building.
Using education to prevent trafficking of ethnic minority girls *China – Yunnan*	■ Increase access to education through scholarships for ethnic minority girls of middle school age. ■ Improve quality of education through new, culturally-appropriate contents and participatory learning methods. ■ Demonstrate replicability in other parts of the country by building partnerships and institutional capacity for sustainability.	■ Train on trafficking prevention and relevant laws. ■ Introduce anti-trafficking as a subject in primary and secondary schools in pilot areas. ■ Introduce unique and socially-adapted curriculum, including life skills, vocational training, gender equity issues and trafficking risks. ■ Incorporate participatory learning methods.

Overcoming Girls' Exploitation		
Case Study	**Key Strategies**	**Innovations**
Combating child domestic labour through education and training *Indonesia*	■ Promote anti-trafficking through policy advocacy, community mobilization and prevention efforts. ■ Utilize non-formal education and vocational education for child domestic labourers as a means of empowering them.	■ At-risk children participate in recreation and sports, receive counselling, and attend non-formal and catch-up education classes. ■ Teachers participate in training which covers efforts to combat school drop out and child trafficking.
Targeting child domestic workers *Philippines*	■ Establish domestic workers' own organizations including for former child domestic workers to help empower them and to build capacity for advocacy and self-protection. ■ Lobby for local and national legislation to register and provide services to domestic workers. ■ Provide services for domestic workers and their families, such as crisis centres, halfway houses and psychosocial interventions. ■ Create a wide range of partnerships with regular partner meetings.	■ First programme in the country to work with domestic workers and try to organize them. ■ Establish outreach in key areas where child domestic workers can be accessed, such as parks, schools, streets and ports, for informing service availability and advocacy. ■ Create partnerships for education – local government and communities are powerful partners, as well as private sector.
Reaching Marginalized Girls		
Reaching ethnic minority girls with quality education *China – Gansu*	■ Produce innovative curriculum and new materials for education quality improvement. ■ Encourage financial support to ensure access and equity. ■ Provide training for teachers and administrators. ■ Communities take part in Participatory School Development Planning. ■ Include programmes for children with disabilities. ■ Hold interventions to improve retention.	■ Use participatory planning and implementation, from curriculum development to teaching methods. ■ Address equity for education with unique methodology, weighing factors of gender and ethnicity in scholarship distribution. ■ Create innovative classroom and school design, which is friendlier to children. ■ Local people, including girls and minorities, develop new books and readers for classes.

Reaching Marginalized Girls		
Case Study	**Key Strategies**	**Innovations**
Providing vocational education for ethnic minority girls *China – Guangxi*	■ Encourage and introduce scholarships and vocational training to improve enrolment of ethnic minority girls, with job placement and follow-up activities. ■ Train teachers on child-centred teaching methods for education quality improvement. ■ Incorporate local capacity building of administrators in management of educational programmes for ethnic minority populations. ■ Research dissemination for policy recommendations.	■ Offer vocational training in conjunction with a general junior high school academic curriculum to meet the needs of students. ■ Involve teachers, students and parents in designing effective curricula. ■ Develop local textbooks that take girls' psychosocial development into account. ■ Promote local action research by programme implementation schools and practitioners.
Offering an Alternative Learning System for out-of-school youths and adults *Philippines*	■ Establish strong partnerships among NGO, local government and communities through advocacy and social mobilization. Hold local government and communities accountable for the successes. ■ Flexible learning programme for out-of-school youths and adults – learners choose teacher, location, and hours of programme.	■ Learners participate in learning programme design. ■ Draw up an Individual Learning Agreement, a contract that spells out commitment and learning contents. ■ Harness a sense of community ownership for the learning programme.

Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
BKK	Bantay Bata sa Komunidad
BPMS	Board of Community and Social Empowerment
CEC	Cambridge Education China
CNSP	Community Supplementary Feeding Programme
DepEd	Department of Education
DIFD	Department for International Development (UK)
DoE	Department of Education
EDC	Education Development Center
EFA	Education for All
EMIS	Educational Management Information Systems
EPSSEG	Education as a Preventive Strategy against the Sexual Exploitation of Girls
GBEP	Gansu Basic Education Project
GDP	Gross domestic product
GER	Gross enrolment rate
GNI	Gross national income
HDI	Human Development Index
HPI	Human Poverty Index
IGTC	International Garment Training Centre
ILO	International Labour Organization
IM	Instructional Manager
IPEC	International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour
KAPE	Kampuchean Action for Primary Education
LDC	Least-developed country
LSCEP	Life Skills Curriculum Enhancement Program
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MFI	Micro-finance institution
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NER	Net enrolment rate
NFE	Non-formal education
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NPA	New People's Army
NPACL	National Program Against Child Labor
NPA-WFCL	National Plan of Action on Worst Forms of Child Labor

OVC	Orphans and vulnerable children
PoE	Provincial Office of Education
PMO	Project Management Office
PRGI	Persatuan Guru Republik Indonesia
RMI	Religious of Mary Immaculate
SCREAM	Supporting Children's Rights through Education, the Arts and the Media
SDP	School Development Planning
SEAMEO	Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization
SUMAPI	Samahan at Ugnayan ng mga Manggagawang Pantahanan sa Pilipinasin
TBP	Time-bound Programme to eliminate the worst forms of child labor
TICSA II	Trafficking in Children in South and South-East Asia
TICW	Mekong Project to Combat Trafficking in Children and Women
UBE	Universal Basic Education
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNGEI	United Nations Girls' Education Initiative
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
US DOL	US Department of Labor
VOP	Village Orientation Program
WFCL	Worst forms of child labour
WFP	World Food Programme
YKAI	Indonesian Child Welfare Foundation

Glossary

Child domestic labour: Child domestic labour refers to situations where children are engaged to perform domestic tasks in the home of a third party or employer that are exploitative. Whenever such exploitation is extreme – and includes trafficking, slavery-like situations, or work that is hazardous and harmful to a child's physical or mental health – it is considered one of the worst forms of child labour (WFCL).[2]

Education for All (EFA): The EFA movement is a global commitment initiated in 1990 to provide quality basic education for all children, youth and adults. In 2000, the international community reaffirmed their commitment to achieving Education for All by the year 2015. They identified six key education goals which aim to meet the learning needs of all children, youth and adults by 2015. The six goals are:

1. Expand early childhood care and education;
2. Provide free and compulsory primary education for all;
3. Promote learning and life skills for young people and adults;
4. Increase adult literacy by 50 per cent;
5. Achieve gender parity by 2005, gender equality by 2015; and
6. Improve the quality of education.

The EFA goals also contribute to the global pursuit of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015, especially MDG 2 on universal primary education and MDG 3 on gender equality in education.

Gross Enrolment Rate (GER): GER comprises the number of children (regardless of age) enrolled in a level (primary or secondary) divided by the population of the age group that officially corresponds to the same level. This is a standard indicator of the level of participation in education. When enrolment ratios are less than 100 per cent, there are not enough schools or slots for students, and children may not be taking the slots that are available because they are kept out of school. When gross enrolment ratios are over 100 per cent, there is much under and/or averaged enrolment, meaning that many students are above or below the official age for the grade; this may be the result of having to repeat grades or entering school late because of work and/or inability to afford school fees.

Human trafficking: Human trafficking means the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.[3]

Least-developed country (LDC): A country is classified as an LDC if it meets a low-income criterion, based on a three-year average estimate of the gross national income (GNI) per capita (under $750 for inclusion, above $900 for graduation); a human resource weakness criterion, involving a composite Human Assets Index (HAI) based on indicators of: (a) nutrition; (b) health; (c) education; and (d) adult literacy; and an economic vulnerability criterion, involving a composite Economic Vulnerability Index (EVI) based on indicators of: (a) the instability of agricultural production; (b) the instability of exports of goods and services; (c) the economic importance of non-traditional activities (share of manufacturing and modern services in GDP); (d) merchandise export concentration; and (e) the handicap of economic smallness (as measured through the population in logarithm); and the percentage of population displaced by natural disasters.[4]

[2] ILO Website: http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipec/themes/domestic/index.htm

[3] The 2000 "Palermo Protocol" to Prevent, suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the UN Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime.

[4] United Nations.

Life skills: This term refers to a large group of psychosocial and interpersonal skills which can help people make informed decisions, communicate effectively, and develop coping and self-management skills that may help them to lead a healthy and productive life. Life skills may be directed towards personal actions and actions towards others, as well as actions to change the surrounding environment to make it conducive to better health.

Malnourishment: People are malnourished if their diet does not provide adequate calories or protein for growth and maintenance or if they are unable to fully utilize the food they eat due to illness.

Net Enrolment Rate (NER): NER comprises the enrolment of the official age group for a given level of education expressed as a percentage of the corresponding population. The purpose is to show the extent of participation in a given level of education of children or youths belonging to the official age group corresponding to the level of education.

Non-formal education (NFE): NFE programmes are often diverse in scope. What they usually have in common is an organized, systematic, educational activity, carried on outside the framework of the formal education system, to provide different types of learning to particular groups in the population, both adults and children. Thus NFE is different from the institutionalized, chronologically-graded and hierarchically-structured nature of the formal education system. However, the boundaries between formal and non-formal education can sometimes be blurred, especially when certification enters into an NFE programme.

Orphans and vulnerable children (OVC): Orphans are defined as children under 18 who have lost either a mother or father. A vulnerable child is a person under 18 years exposed to conditions which do not permit him/her to fulfil his/her fundamental rights for his/her harmonious development. For example, those who reside in households affected by HIV/AIDS, in which a parent or principle caretaker is HIV infected.

Street children: This term refers to children (under 18 years) who spend most of their time on the streets. The target group is homeless and vulnerable street children and adolescents (including their families), who are at high risk of exploitation and physical and emotional abuse, especially through forced commercial sex and violence in the streets.

Universal Basic Education (UBE): This was the promise of the Dakar meeting hosted by UNESCO in 2000, where more than 180 nations committed to the goal (which later became a Millennium Development Goal) of achieving universal basic education by 2015. Basic education means the type of education, in quality and content, that is given in the first level of formal education. This concept changes from country to country – i.e. some see it as primary education and others see it as extending a few years beyond this. Basic education allows personal development, intellectual autonomy, integration into professional life and participation in the development of society in the context of democracy.[5]

Visibly underemployed: A person is considered visibly underemployed – also known now as time-related underemployed – if he/she is willing and available to work additional hours, but is worked less than a threshold relating to working time (in the reference period).

Worst Forms of Child Labour (WFCL): This is defined as: 1) Hazardous labour that jeopardizes the physical, mental or moral well-being of a child due to its nature or the conditions. Domestic work for girls can be considered WFCL if conditions are hazardous or involve trafficking or physical and sexual abuse; and 2) The Unconditional Worst Forms of Child Labour which are internationally defined as slavery, trafficking, debt bondage and other forms of forced labour, forced recruitment of children for use in armed conflict, prostitution and pornography, and illicit activities.[6]

[5] UNESCO Website: http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/wef_2000/regional_frameworks/frame_europe_north_america.shtml

[6] UNESCO, bangkok, *Getting girls out of work and into school*, Pg. 8, (2006).

PART I

OVERCOMING GIRLS' EXPLOITATION

CAMBODIA

Preventing child trafficking and exploitation through education

Contents

1 Context

1.1 Overview

The Cambodian city of Phnom Penh is a place of stark contrasts: from palaces and elite neighbourhoods, to dilapidated houses and poor communities, to the western bank of the Tonle Sap River, which caters to foreign tourists. At least 180,000 squatters live amidst a population of 1.1 million[1], and the bright lights of Phnom Penh beckon to tens of thousands more Cambodians who migrate to the capital every year. Many of these migrants are women. Some are children. Often they are unprepared for what they will find. "We have 20,000 children living on the streets of Phnom Penh, and even more families with no homes. The numbers are increasing,'' says Ly Sophat, director of Mith Samlanh (Friends), a non-governmental organization (NGO) that works with street children.

1.2 Migration, trafficking and child labour

In a well-established migratory pattern, young people from poor villages and farms travel to the capital city in search of jobs, opportunities, and a better life. Unsafe migration and trafficking are widespread problems in many countries. However, in light of Cambodia's troubled history, the risks can be even greater. Nearly four decades of war, civil conflict, political instability and misrule have had great impact on the country. Cambodia is an appealing destination for tourists, but the underworld of trafficking, bonded labour and an accessible sex industry also attracts paedophiles. It is easy to find brothels in Phnom Penh and its outskirts, where children work as commercial sex workers. The exploitation of children for commercial sex and labour is clearly a serious problem, though its very nature makes it difficult to find accurate data. The former Minister of Women's Affairs, Mu Soc Hua, estimates that 30,000 children are sexually exploited in Cambodia.[2] Government estimates on such matters tend to be conservative. According to Lesley Miller of UNICEF's Child Protection Unit in Phnom Penh, "Even if you look at arrests, if the numbers are up does it mean that there is more trafficking, or that the police are getting better at what they do? You have to be careful how you interpret numbers and what they mean. Most of our evidence is anecdotal." United Nations agencies have been working on the trafficking problem for a decade, and the government is increasingly concerned about the situation. In 2000, the government enacted a five-year programme to combat child sexual exploitation through information dissemination and law enforcement.

According to the ILO, "trafficking is often linked to hasty and ill-prepared migration but stems primarily from poverty, lack of access to education and training, a socio-economic imbalance between urban and rural areas, as well as the impact of globalization and rising consumer expectations. Cambodia faces a growing problem of providing decent work for its young population, further increasing the drive to cross-border migration and perpetuating the cycle of vulnerability to human trafficking."[3] Men Sedthaorat of UNICEF's Child Protection Unit in Phnom Penh concurs: "We are becoming more materialistic. This is what globalization has done."

In a well-established migratory pattern, young people from poor villages and farms travel to the capital city in search of jobs, opportunities and a better life. Unsafe migration and trafficking are widespread problems in many countries. However, in light of Cambodia's troubled history, the risks can be even greater. Nearly four decades of war, civil conflict, political instability and misrule have had great impact on the country. Continuing power struggles, corruption, limited physical infrastructure and scarce human resources all contribute to continuing poverty. The national genocide perpetrated by the Khmer Rouge regime from 1975 to 1979 left a generation still in need of psychosocial support. Indeed, with "a generation growing up under the Khmer Rouge … the culture has changed," says Men Sedthaorat. Now, parents sell their girls for money. Rather than a lack of caring, this is perhaps more reflective of the utterly desperate situation that many parents find themselves in.

Children's involvement in child labour – a legal concept reflecting the subset of work that is injurious, negative or undesirable to children – is very high. Over 750,000 economically-active children are below the absolute minimum working age of 12 years. According to Men Sedthaorat, of the under-17 age group working in underage 'non-light' economic activities and in hazardous sectors, an estimated 1.5 million 7- to 17-year-olds are child labourers, 40 per cent of this age group. The situation persists despite the fact that current laws prohibit children under 15 years from employment. In fact, the figures given above are lower bound estimates, as they do not include either involvement in nine of the 16 nationally identified hazardous sectors, or involvement in unconditional worst forms of work. 72.7 per cent of economically-active children work in agriculture, compared with only 16 per cent in commerce, 6.3 per cent in manufacturing, 2.3 per cent in services and 2.7 per cent in other sectors.[4]

Despite this list of challenges, the 13.8 million people of Cambodia are determined to rebuild. Their greatest resource may be their young generation: 35 per cent of Cambodians are aged 14 or under.[5] The foundations of their future are health and education, and the government has made commitments to these two areas. However, all stakeholders must concert their efforts if Cambodia's young are to reach their full potential. Life expectancy is currently just 51.9 years for males and 57.1 years for females.[6] Infant mortality is 97 per thousand, and mortality for children under five year olds is 140 per thousand – among the highest in the South-East Asian region. For those living in remote, rural areas the figures are significantly worse.

1.3 Economic growth

The alleviation of poverty through economic growth is showing encouraging signs. According to the World Bank, Cambodia experienced unexpectedly strong growth in 2005, reaching 7 per cent gross domestic product (GDP) growth[7] – a higher GDP growth than neighbouring Thailand, which is a regional economic powerhouse. This is heartening news for Cambodia, as it has only had a market economy for 15 years. The growth, however, comes from a small base. Cambodia is classified as an LDC by the United Nations, meaning it is one of the poorest countries in the world. Officially, total GDP was US$5.3 billion in 2005.[8] Foreign direct investment has been declining, and totalled just US$77 million in 2003. Both the lack of infrastructure and the absence of the rule of law are major deterrents to investment – as is a poorly-educated workforce.

Most of the economic activity spurring growth is centred on two industries: garment and textile manufacturing and tourism. This focus on just two productive sectors leaves the economy vulnerable. Garments account for over 90 per cent of exports, and 80 per cent of them go to the United States.[9] The country still runs a trade deficit, although it has been shrinking. Nearly three quarters of Cambodians are subsistence farmers, with much of the land subject to drought, flooding from monsoons, or landmines that are a legacy of conflict. There is a real need for the country's workforce to gain new skills if Cambodia is to attract foreign direct investment and reach its full economic capacity.

The future will depend, therefore, on health and education. The government is taking positive steps: with major armed conflicts receding into the past, the government has initiated a demobilization programme for the armed forces, aiming to cut the number of soldiers by 30,000 in just a few years.[10] Consequently, it has reduced the budget for the military to give more funding to the social sector.

1.4 Education, health and challenges for the future

The impacts of child labour and health on education is significant. Many Cambodian children are simply not in good enough health to perform to the best of their abilities. According to the World Food Programme (WFP), "Malnutrition, especially in rural Cambodia, is widespread, particularly among children under five years and among expectant and nursing women. The country's malnutrition rates are among the highest in Southeast Asia."[11] The WFP estimated that 35 per cent of Cambodians suffered from malnutrition in 2004.[12] Malnutrition and exhaustion from overwork – because many children work or are engaged in child labour in addition to attending school – are major problems.

Additionally, there is enormous need in the field of education. Problems include: a lack of classrooms, equipment and other infrastructure; low salaries that force teachers to work second jobs; a shortage of qualified and experienced teachers in rural areas; lack of assistance to poor students; and the persistence of informal school fees that hinder attendance by the disadvantaged. A large pool of over-age students also complicates the attempt to educate all.

The trends, however, are positive. The government has signed on to the Millennium Declaration, although not the Millennium Development Goals – Cambodia has its own set of benchmarks, known as the Cambodia Millennium Development Goals, and submits regular progress reports on their status. The government has also signed on to the Dakar Framework for Action. It conducted its own Education for All Assessment in 2000 and acknowledges that more needs to be done for the education sector. It devised an Education Strategic Plan and an Education Sector Support Program 2001-2006. The government is also one of the first countries to adopt a sector-wide approach to support education.[13] It has created a Priority Action Plan to address different needs in strengthening education. Primary school enrolment rates have increased significantly in recent years, although there is a need for evidence-based figures on these rates. Cambodia's Educational Management Information Systems (EMIS) school census found primary school enrolment rates of 90 per cent in 2003. But the Cambodia Child Labor Survey in 2001 showed 70 per cent, while a corresponding EMIS survey recorded 84 per cent in the same period. Completion rates are lower. According to the Cambodia Child Labor Survey, about 75 per cent of those who enrol in primary school eventually complete primary school.

Complicating matters is the fact that many primary school students are over age. According to the World Bank, over-age enrolment is pervasive in basic primary education and is primarily due to late school entry at the appropriate age.[14] Late school entry "is not a temporary phenomenon but is strongly related to structural factors."[15] Most of the recent gains in primary net enrolment rates reflect the large influx of over-age children entering the first year of primary school, as opposed to children staying longer in school. The reality is that while most children spend some time in primary school, significant numbers drop out before completing the primary school cycle, thereby reducing the overall impact of schooling.[16] Not surprisingly, drop-out rates are highest among the poor.

One of the main reasons for school children dropping out is the cost of schooling. The government of Cambodia has officially eliminated school fees, but informal fees charged by schools and teachers persist, partly because teachers are underpaid. The average monthly wage for a primary school teacher in the provinces is US$20 a month.[17] Many teachers need to secure second jobs in order to support themselves and their families.

While enrolment rates in primary school may be improving, for all of the factors noted above, the situation in secondary schools is cause for concern. In 2003, enrolment rates were 21.3 per cent in lower secondary school and 8.1 per cent in upper secondary school, according to EMIS data.[18]

With limited schooling, and poverty pervasive in rural areas, the existing situation is ripe for migration, trafficking and exploitation of young people. A variety of approaches and programmes are needed to reduce these problems, including better law enforcement and an honest, reliable justice system. Nonetheless, any effort to prevent young people from falling into the net of unsafe migration and the trap of trafficking must make young people more aware of the choices and the dangers they face, and provide them with alternatives. Any effort, therefore, must include education.

2 Programme description

2.1 Overview

The OPTIONS[19] Program grew out of the Education as a Preventive Strategy against the Sexual Exploitation of Girls (EPSSEG) project. EPSSEG was a pilot project – its first phase ran from July 2002 to December 2003 with a funding grant from UNICEF. It was implemented in seven communes in the Ba Phnom and Kampong Trabek districts of Prey Veng province in Cambodia. Conceived as a multi-year initiative, World Education won further funding through a US Department of Labor (US DOL) bid for a four-year programme using education as a preventative strategy against child exploitation. World Education used this opportunity to build on, and extend upon the work that had been piloted under EPSSEG, and as a result, the OPTIONS Program was designed, with EPSSEG continuing under the OPTIONS Program umbrella. UNICEF has continued to co-fund this programme alongside US DOL. The programme now covers 12 districts in three provinces: Prey Veng, Kampong Cham and Bantey Meanchay. These three provinces were chosen because they are among the poorest and have some of the highest rates of out-migration. This phase of the programme is scheduled to run through August 2007.

The objectives of the OPTIONS Program in Prey Veng province are:

- Increase access and improve quality of learning for at-risk girls and exploited children in formal and non-formal education programmes.
- Raise community awareness on child trafficking and exploitation, and improve attitudes toward educating children, especially girls, in the face of difficult economic circumstances.
- Increase effectiveness of district and community working groups to plan, implement and monitor the full range of interventions offered under the programme.

2.2 Education as exploitation prevention

The EPSSEG pilot project in 2002 was the first initiative in Cambodia to focus specifically on education of vulnerable girls as a prevention strategy against trafficking and exploitation, which made it unique in Cambodia at that time. According to Program Director Ingrid Martonova, OPTIONS' is similarly distinct from other anti-trafficking programmes, which focus more specifically on rescue, rehabilitation, protection and/or prosecution. Because OPTIONS does not focus on these other aspects of counter-trafficking, and does not claim to have expertise in them, it is able to deliver an education package which offers innovative prevention strategies.

Beyond that, World Education has developed materials and approaches around teaching life skills. In Cambodia, life skills are often misinterpreted as including only literacy and vocational skills. But the OPTIONS Program teaches enabling life skills such as critical thinking and problem solving. Through OPTIONS, these types of life skills are now taught as an extracurricular activity for at-risk girls in formal schools targeted by the programme.

2.3 Funding

World Education's main partners on the funding side of the project are the US DOL, The McKnight Foundation, UNICEF, The Asia Foundation and The WFP. On the operational side, partners include UNICEF, CARE International, The Asia Foundation, Equal Access, and Cambodian NGOs Kampuchean Action for Primary Education (KAPE), Mith Samlanh, Vulnerable Children's Assistance Organization, Damnok Toek (Goutte D'eau), Ponleur Kumar and the Cambodian Women's Crisis Center.

Funding for this phase of OPTIONS consisted of: US$3 million from the US DOL; from September 2003 to April 2007, total UNICEF funding was US$607,318; a further US$599,852 was granted by private sources, many of which were sourced by The Asia Foundation.

For the OPTIONS Program, World Education is the lead agency in Prey Veng province, KAPE is the lead agency in Kompong Cham, and CARE International is the lead agency in Bantey Meanchay province.

From the US DOL funding stream, OPTIONS has provided approximately US$100,000 annually in small grants to local NGOs, including Mith Samlanh, Damnok Toek, Vulnerable Children Assistance Organization, and Ponleur Kumar.

2.4 Programme beneficiaries

The main target group for interventions is adolescent girls, including both in- and out-of-school youths. Martonova says that while OPTIONS also provides assistance to boys who have been exploited, at-risk girls are the main target beneficiaries because traditionally they have less opportunity for education than boys. Girls are also especially vulnerable to labour and sexual exploitation – particularly if they have had limited education.[20] Indirect beneficiaries include community leaders and members of working groups who gain valuable support and experience in shaping and administering community affairs. The families of the children benefit as well, because a child with greater knowledge of self-protection can better the future of the entire family.

2.5 Working structure and stakeholders

From the beginning, OPTIONS has worked with government officials at all levels from the national government down to the villages. In Prey Veng province, for example, the working structure of the programme is as follows:

OPTIONS Management and Technical Team: designs education interventions, and develops curricula, materials and teacher/facilitator plans; trains district and cluster working groups, and supports and monitors the implementation of the programme; coordinates at the district and provincial level with government, international agencies and NGO partners.

Livelihood Development Work Teams (L Teams): participate in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of the livelihood components of My Better Future. Each team is cluster based with six to ten members, and reports to the G Group. Members include the Commune Chief, a Non-Formal Education Facilitator, a girl representative, a parent representative and a local entrepreneur.

District Girls' Education Animator Group (D Group): trains cluster groups, and supports and monitors the implementation of the programme. Members include the Department of Education (DoE) Director/Deputy Director, DoE staff responsible for primary education, DoE female staff previously active on the Girls' Secondary Scholarship Program, a member of the Department of Women's Affairs responsible for the Child Protection Network, a member of the Office of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth responsible for the Child Protection Network.

Girls' Education Working Groups (G Groups): participate in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of the OPTIONS Program at the cluster level. Each group is cluster based with six to ten members. Members include the Cluster School Director, the Cluster Community Association Chairperson, a female primary school teacher, a Core Commune Teacher (NFE), a member of the community-based Child Protection Network, a female Commune Council Advisor/member of the Women's Association.

2.6 Formal and non-formal education approach

The programme is divided into two main sections, one directed at formal schooling and the other at non-formal schooling. The formal schooling component consists mainly of scholarship support and life skills education for fifth and sixth grade girls. It is supported by WFP food assistance to families in order to help them keep the girls in school. A Catch Up Course was also implemented in the first year of the project (2002 to 2003) to help out-of-school girls under 12 years who wished to enter or re-enter the formal school system to come up to speed and join a grade level suitable for their age. Re-entry assistance continues to be offered to the non-formal programme learners who are under 15 and who wish to enter formal school after the completion of their basic literacy course.

Martonova says that the skills course for in-school girls aims to strike a balance between teaching "traditional" practical skills – such as cooking and vegetable growing – and building 'empowerment' life skills – such as self-confidence, critical thinking, problem solving and team building. In addition, educating girls in health, reproductive health, hygiene, HIV/AIDS, safe migration and domestic violence, provides them with a set of knowledge that is extremely valuable for adolescent girls in rural Cambodia.

The non-formal component is a programme called 'My Better Future.' It provides out-of-school, illiterate adolescent girls with an 18-month course divided into three parts: the first six months is a basic literacy section; the second six months teaches life skills education and prepares them for the final stage of the programme; the final stage consists of six to eight months of skills training, savings group training and continuing education activities to complete the livelihood development programme.

Aside from literacy and vocational skills, the My Better Future package helps learners to develop the ability to think critically, to examine the problems around them and to come up with workable solutions. The package also teaches learners to act with confidence, and to turn their solution into action. "I think that is our key innovation," Martonova says. "People who have seen the girls who have gone through the formal or non-formal education programme we've helped provide have commented that these girls are incredibly confident and knowledgeable. We may think this is obvious to us with our own learning opportunities, but this is something that eludes the majority of children in rural Cambodia.''

2.7 Practical and life skills to empower girls

While many of the occupational courses taught through OPTIONS may appear to reinforce established gender norms, such as sewing and cooking, the girls are also given 'small business training' and taught to do a 'participatory labour market assessment,' where they assess the feasibility of various employment and business options in their local community. Coupled with critical thinking and problem-solving skills, these girls certainly have the potential to change traditional perceptions about female capabilities.

OPTIONS has also requested joint activities with UNICEF Community Supplementary Feeding Programme (CNSP), Seth Koma and the Seila Program. To strengthen their capacity, girls participating in OPTIONS are also encouraged to take part in UNICEF CNSP, Seth Koma and Seila-supported activities – such as village awareness raising, women and child assessment, and commune investment planning. In these activities, the girls have the right to give or share ideas in locally-planned activities, and sometimes they play a role in raising the community's awareness about trafficking or HIV/AIDS. These kinds of capabilities are not the norm among young Cambodian women and girls, and this alone helps to transform gender perceptions.

Thus, it appears that modest, but significant steps are being taken as far as gender roles are concerned through the OPTIONS Program. Although about 30 per cent of the girls opt for agriculture training for their livelihood course, according to Martonova, this is not a negative outcome. Considering that Prey Veng is mainly a farming province, learning effective practice is very useful. And considering the weakened state of Cambodian society following nearly four decades of conflict, perhaps repairing and strengthening the traditional foundations of communities is more important at this moment than an aggressive pursuit of changing traditional gender roles. Although change is a long process, the programme is giving girls the knowledge and tools to help make it happen. Only time will tell how fast and how far the changes will go. They are bound to increase over time.

3 Process

3.1 OPTIONS evolves from NGO and government partnerships

According to World Education documents, UNICEF approached World Education and asked it to develop the project proposal for the pilot phase of OPTIONS, known at the time as 'Education as a Preventive Strategy against the Sexual Exploitation of Girls'. Before the pilot phase of OPTIONS began, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was agreed upon between World Education in Cambodia and the Ministry of Interior. At that time, an MoU was also signed with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.

Under these terms, the pilot phase then ran from July 2002 through August 2003. During the pilot phase, the US DOL solicited proposals for programmes to combat the trafficking and exploitation of children, particularly young girls. The US DOL selected a World Education-led consortium of international and local NGOs, and OPTIONS was launched in September 2003, with the current phase ending in August 2007.

3.2 Building on existing structures for sustainability

OPTIONS prefers to work through existing structures, so that "there is something on the ground that can sustain similar intervention and leadership," Martonova says. The Girls' Education Working Groups and District Girls' Education Animators Groups are made up of individuals who already hold positions of civic leadership/responsibility in their community, such as commune council chiefs, school directors, cluster school directors, and female representatives of the Commune Council Women and Children Focal Point. The idea is to work with people who already have a mandate for supporting vulnerable children in their communities (given their government-appointed role), but who may not be able to deliver on this mandate given their limited resources and technical skills. Participation in an OPTIONS working group provides them with these resources, and helps them to deliver on their official mandate. It also strengthens their capacity to carry on with similar activities in the future.

3.3 Collaboration at government levels

The Government of Cambodia is a major partner and stakeholder. At the national level, this includes the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport; the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation; the Ministry of Women's Affairs; and the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training. At lower levels, the programme works in partnership with provincial and district government departments of education, social affairs, labour and vocational training, and women's affairs, and with district-level and commune-level working groups.

This is the key to the strategy used by OPTIONS in designing and implementing the programme. By pulling in leaders at the provincial, district and commune levels to participate in working groups or otherwise support the programme, OPTIONS cultivates a sense of ownership among all parties. These people then also became stakeholders in the programme. In a sense, they became beneficiaries; as they provided education to young people, girls in particular, they also improved their standing as effective leaders in their respective positions or communities. Particularly for government and education officials, gaining technical assistance built their capacities and made them better performers and more valuable to everyone, including their superiors.

Within the OPTIONS' structure, the aim is for various government levels work together in an integrated system, providing support and adding capacity. "They [the Girls' Education Working Groups] select participants for the programme, ensure the activities are actually taking place, give out scholarships, do follow up, and monitoring and evaluation," Martonova says. "They are really the ones who are doing the work. But it also takes a lot of our time to facilitate them doing the work – in other words, a lot of technical assistance, and a lot of joint work and joint evaluations. The working groups receive some support and guidance from the District Girls' Education Animators Group. We do training together."

3.4 Partner roles

CARE International was called upon to assist in the start up of the basic literacy classes because their staff had experience in this field. CARE staff trained the trainers for these courses. They also provided gender awareness training for members of District Girls' Education Animator Groups and community-level Girls' Education Working Groups. Materials and training plans from Save the Children Norway helped train teachers for the Catch Up Courses, which brought over-age girls up to speed so they could enter or re-enter formal schooling at an appropriate grade for their age. The Catch Up Course was only implemented in the first year of the programme, as in subsequent years, staff were not able to identify a large enough concentration of young, out-of-school girls (under 12 years) to warrant running a separate course.

Cambodian NGO KAPE provided many of the technical documents used in the programme, such as Working Group Performance Review forms and forms for administering student scholarships. OPTIONS modified these documents to some degree, and each year, reviews what documents are available and how they should be modified.

Mith Samlanh – a Cambodian NGO which works with street children in Phnom Penh and Kampong Cham – also provided materials for illiterate young people that communicate the dangers of migration and what to watch out for. These were often in storyboard form, using either photos or drawings. Also, with funding support from OPTIONS, Mith Samlanh set up outreach teams in Phnom Penh to go to areas where migrants congregate, such as Wat Phnom, the bus station and the river. Team members talk to street vendors, the police and others to identify young people who would benefit from OPTIONS. Volunteers then go out and talk to the migrants, and try to provide services to make migrants' lives as safe as possible. "It's a nice complement to our efforts, and fits into our awareness-raising cluster of activities," Martonova says.

The Asia Foundation contributed to the OPTIONS Program by helping to organize advocacy workshops with local stakeholders at the district and provincial levels. Workshops were held for two days at the district level, one day at the provincial level and three days at the national level. The objective of the workshops was to try to improve collaboration between different stakeholders who are concerned with the needs of vulnerable and exploited children (government, NGO staff and community members), and to identify policy gaps which needed to be addressed at the national level. The Asia Foundation invited the provincial governors to the provincial workshops so they could find out about the problems in the villages and communities, and learn about necessary actions for the future. The Asia Foundation helped OPTIONS to come up with recommendations to the programme's Advisory Committee for addressing policy implementation challenges at the local level. These recommendations were then taken to the national workshop, which was held in January 2006 and included high-level representatives from the Ministries of Education, Women's Affairs, Labor and Vocational Training, and Social Affairs.

UNICEF Education Section was an important partner to OPTIONS. When OPTIONS decided to leave Kampong Trabaik district (where the programme was experiencing obstacles with local management), it referred beneficiaries to UNICEF to see if it could give some support to the girls, such as scholarship assistance. In other situations, some OPTIONS beneficiaries have become group leaders for UNICEF's children's clubs. Likewise, some of the girls who have graduated from OPTIONS' NFE programme have become school teachers in community-based schools supported by Seth Koma. UNICEF has also made available posters and flip charts on children's rights, domestic violence, and safe migration, which have been used in awareness-raising activities supported by OPTIONS.

Seila, a nationally-supported community development programme, also provided training to girls in the OPTIONS Program on how to participate in several activities that contribute to the annual commune investment planning process.

The World Food Programme provides rice and limited supplies of vegetable oil to the girls and their families to help compensate for the loss of their work – either on the farm or around the house – due to participation in school, training workshops and community development activities.

The Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation, a Cambodian NGO, gives agricultural training for girls participating in the NFE programme, but only in the Prey Veng province. Within specific districts of the three provinces, a number of small, local NGOs also partner in various roles as participants reach out and request additional skills and technical support.

3.5 Identifying and enrolling girls in the programme

In Prey Veng, OPTIONS began by working with the Community-Based Child Protection Network and the Provincial Child Protection Committees, along with the Ministry of Social Affairs. The Network called a case conference in which it presented OPTIONS with a list of vulnerable and at-risk girls in the communities where OPTIONS was being launched. The lists, however, were too large and did not contain enough information. So, OPTIONS met with the Provincial Department of Social Affairs and, with its backing, OPTIONS workers, along with members of the Village Development Committees, began visiting homes of girls on the list to determine which ones were most seriously at risk.

Out of this selection model, OPTIONS has evolved its current method for targeting beneficiaries. The following example illustrates how enrolment works for in-school girls. A selection process that takes place during school holidays (August to September), and is carried out by the Girls' Education Working Group at the commune level, identifies a girl in grade 5 as being at high risk of drop-out. A working group member meets with the girl and her family to discuss the family circumstance, and ways in which the OPTIONS Program can help the girl to continue her studies. The working group member discusses the possibility of scholarship assistance, and if the girl attends a school that also offers the Life Skills Curriculum Enhancement Program (LSCEP) – which is offered to girls in grades 5 and 6 – she is offered the opportunity to enrol in this extracurricular activity.

The family agrees to support the girl's education in exchange for the support from the OPTIONS Program, and participates in an orientation for all scholarship beneficiaries and their families, which is held in October. At this time, the girl receives her first allocation of scholarship assistance. (There is a second allocation later in the year.) In November, when the LSCEP course begins, she starts to attend the LSCEP course with other girls from grades 5 and 6. In addition to this, she and her family receive a rice ration support once every three months (in the amount of 45 kg, or 15 kg per month).

The working group distributes the rice ration to her and other girls in her school. The working group receives the rice ration from the rice store in their commune, district or town. The rice store is managed by the district-level working group together with the OPTIONS District Coordinator (World Education staff member). The rice comes from the WFP through an agreement between the WFP and World Education. During the year, the commune-level working group monitors the girl's attendance through a review of school attendance records. If she is absent more than three times in a row, a group member will visit her home to see why she is not attending school. When families don't see the value in educating their girls, or children in general, members of the working groups, who are also members of the community, visit the families and attempt to persuade them to allow their children to attend school. The programme finds that the home visits serve as a great prevention strategy against drop-out, using peer pressure to compel families to keep girls in the programme.

For out-of-school girls the selection for the NFE programme takes place through an announcement in a target village, which is carried out by the commune-level Girls' Education Working Group. All girls above the age of 12 years who are out of school and are interested in enrolling in the OPTIONS NFE Program are invited to join. Once girls join, the working group members conduct an orientation with them and their families, to explain the purpose of the programme, its goals and objectives, and the expectation that families will provide the time and support for girls to participate in the My Better Future Program. The programme begins with the six-month literacy course.

In the non-formal programme, the girls are trained and encouraged to establish a savings group during the post-literacy stage. Like the girls in the formal school system, the NFE learners receive the same amount of rice ration support once every three months. The rice is distributed by the working group members, as described above. The working group members monitor the girls' attendance, and if a girl is absent more than three times, they conduct a home visit, as with the formal school students. Girls are supported and encouraged to complete the basic literacy stage, then move into the life skills and livelihood preparation stage, and then complete their training in their chosen livelihood area. As this takes more than 18 months, which is a long time for an out-of-school girl to invest into studies, the working group members and course facilitators conduct various outreach activities to keep the girls motivated, and their families committed.

4 Outcomes

4.1 Monitoring and evaluation

As described in the project's name and stated goals, the reduction of exploitation, unsafe migration and trafficking is a long-term goal. The key expected outcome of the OPTIONS Program is that children who are vulnerable to exploitation, or who have been exploited, will be educated in programmes that are appropriate to their special needs. Ancillary outcomes would also be a higher regard for girls and the education of girls among community members, and improved administrative capabilities of community working groups and community leaders.

Has OPTIONS achieved its goals? Has the programme had a real impact on the lives of young women? As stated earlier by Lesley Miller of UNICEF's Child Protection Unit, any statistics regarding exploitation of children are suspect and their meaning open to various interpretations. Evidence is anecdotal. Trends are simply not measurable at this time. When it comes to migration, Mith Samlanh says it has not seen any reduction in the number of migrants arriving in Phnom Penh, but they don' t have statistics that might give clues as to whether the number of migrants from OPTIONS areas has decreased.

An important part of the OPTIONS Program in both formal and non-formal education is life skills education. Monitoring and evaluation of the impact of life skills programmes in any country has often been found to be problematic. How does one measure behaviour that has been prevented? However, nurturing the development of a wide range of personal skills and qualities is measurable. In relation to the NFE programme, OPTIONS' uses tracer studies and the tracking of key capital assets as a base measurement of its impact on girls' livelihood development over the course of the programme and after they graduate.

The programme fully realizes the importance of monitoring and evaluation, both to fine tune and adjust the programme so it is as effective as possible and helps as many girls as possible, and to maintain the programme's support and funding. It has presented numerous progress reports to partners and donors, and has cooperated with a US DOL consultant, Ms. Esther Velasco, who has completed a monitoring study of the project.

The fact that certain outcomes are difficult or impossible to measure does not mean that OPTIONS isn't effective, or doesn't have a positive impact on the lives of young women. Sok Kimsroeung can, in fact, point to one significant and measurable piece of evidence that the programme is indeed working: the number of female enrolments in lower secondary school in Prey Veng. According to Kimsroeung, during the first year of the programme there were none. During the second year, 18 girls passed through the transition to lower secondary school. In 2006, 198 girls were enrolled in lower secondary schools that the programme supported. Furthermore, to date, OPTIONS has had more than 870 girls enrol in basic literacy, and of these, more than 660 have persisted into post-literacy.

4.2 Changing attitudes

"In the community, people are aware of the importance of girls' education. Before they said, 'stop, you don't need to continue.' Now even if they are poor, they want girls to attend to know how to read and write. Now girls can explain things to older people and they believe them. They have more faith in their children and recognition of children's abilities. In the commune investment planning process they say children have good ideas and can explain them and write them down. Now some parents push their kids to attend school," Kimsroeung says.

Saroeun Nhean of the Ministry of Education agrees. "The community benefits because before there were a lot of children out of school, but now they can come back to school. Before, the community members or local authorities had to spend a lot of time trying to convince people to send their children to school. Now they see the result and there is less work for them to do on that. They can devote their energies to other tasks in developing the community."

Teachers are working harder too, Kimsroeung insists. "They say what we are doing is an important thing and we need to use this opportunity to support the community,'' she says. And community spirit has improved. In the working groups, the leaders contribute their own time. Some get a per diem, but some don't. They volunteer. And they donate part of their own house to store the rice for kids donated from the WFP. "They do this with transparency, and that's a big, big change," Kimsroeung says.

Martonova says partners and stakeholders, such as the Girls' Education Working Groups, have an increased level of confidence in their ability to do planning, implementation and monitoring of educational activities. In terms of ownership, they look at these not as OPTIONS activities but as interventions the Ministry of Education should be carrying out, as something that should become part and parcel of the Ministry's future agenda. "We do feel ownership,'' Saroeun Nhean agrees. "We feel it's ours because although we get experience from other countries we adapt things to each locality. We take what's applicable. The strength of the programme is its structure; the way they work at all levels from provincial to district to commune level. And their commitment is impressive. It's having good results."

4.3 Positive impacts on girls and their communities

Some results can be seen on the ground. During a life skills education class for fifth and sixth grade girls at Chan Krousnar Primary School in the Mesang district, a teacher divided 30 students into five working groups and asked them to list facts and myths about HIV/AIDS. Topics included how it is transmitted, how it can be prevented and how to deal with people who are living with HIV/AIDS. In a rural school where the classrooms were completely devoid of any modern equipment and the poverty of the girls was evident from their soiled uniforms and stained teeth, the students, nonetheless, demonstrated an impressive degree of knowledge. They were able to list all the important facts regarding HIV/AIDS as well as to identify myths and falsehoods. What they knew compared favourably with, and perhaps surpassed, what some of their peer counterparts in neighbouring Thailand know. "I'm interested in this. With this knowledge I can protect myself," says Chumlong Heng, a student in the class.

A few kilometres away, under a thatched roof shelter in the village of Krel, 27 girls, mostly in their teens, had put aside their chores. Rather than sleeping through the abominable heat of a dry season afternoon, they attended a life skills class as part of their NFE programme. Only a year ago, none of these girls could read. Now they are reading, writing and have organized a micro-savings group. " This has made a difference,'' says Pien Soporn, 17. "Now I can read documents that might be important to me and my family. Even on television there is lots of writing. Now I know what's going on. People here have a lot more knowledge now."

And in Ba Phnom district, 10 girls who graduated from My Better Future, OPTIONS' NFE programme for out-of-school girls, took time out from work to talk about what the programme had done for them. Many were still farmers. "But now I know how to take better care of my pigs, recognize illnesses. Now they breed and grow faster. I'm more efficient. I also learned some small business management skills from the programme. This has helped raise living conditions for me and my family,'' says Kai Wanna, 17. Other graduates had become beauticians or seamstresses. All said their incomes were up and their lives improved because of OPTIONS.

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Vignette 1: A healer for the community

Chunlong Heng is a small girl with a big dream. Just 14 years old, she's determined to be a doctor. For a sixth-grade student from Chan Krousnar village in Cambodia's Prey Veng province, this is an ambitious goal. Prey Veng is poor; one of the poorest provinces in a country that is already synonymous with hardship. Few villagers in this community of about 200 rice-farming families have ever seen a physician – they've only visited the local health volunteer at a centre run by an NGO.

In a province where more than half of the people live below the government's poverty line[21], health problems and disease abound – including HIV/AIDS. Heng is no stranger to this deadly disease, which had infected approximately 170,000 Cambodians by 2001. Nearby her family's farm is the home of an old man living with HIV. "I used to be afraid, because I knew almost nothing about it," she says.

This year, however, she has been taking a life skills education course in her public school, something that has only been offered during the last three years. Students are taught a variety of topics, such as integrated pest management for farming, reproductive health and trafficking. But the topic that most interested Heng was HIV/AIDS education. During a recent life skills class she was able to accurately list the ways in which HIV is transmitted and identify myths about transmission that propagate fear and misunderstanding. "Now, I'm not afraid anymore," she says.

Heng's father studied through grade 10, and her mother completed grade 3. They do value education and she says they want their four children – of which Heng is the oldest – to stay in school. "I want to know how to treat illnesses so I can help my family and my community," she says. In Prey Veng, where only 30 per cent of children finish primary school, there is no telling whether or not Heng will ever reach her goal of becoming a doctor. She is already showing some of the most crucial skills for any doctor, ones which experts say are often lacking among health care workers in the region who deal with HIV/AIDS: care and understanding. Since taking the life skills class, Heng often visits the old man, helping to break the isolation that demoralizes many living with HIV/AIDS. "We have to try and encourage him," Heng says. With her newly gained knowledge, coupled with her spirit of compassion, Chunlong Heng is already a healer in her community.

5 Analysis

5.1 Operational challenges in leadership roles

In attempting to achieve its outcomes, OPTIONS encountered a number of operational challenges which had to be either dealt with or overcome. The situation in Kampong Trabaik district, for instance, was one which was beyond the capabilities of OPTIONS to improve or rectify. Kampong Trabaik was a target area in the EPSSEG pilot project. However, the programme did not achieve its objectives in the district. The problem, according to Program Director Ingrid Martonova, was deficient local leadership and a lack of accountability.

"Kampong Trabaik was an absolute disappointment. People were not delivering on what they were supposed to do. The problem was local leadership and accountability. After discussions with the Provincial Office of Education (PoE) to find a way to deal with the issue, the PoE and OPTIONS decided to stop providing educational assistance to this district. It's not fair to the children in the area. The key ingredient for success in any programme in Cambodia today is the leadership and commitment at the commune level. If you don't have that you can dump US$5 million in there and nothing will happen to improve the lives of the girls in the classroom. Unfortunately, poor areas often have poor leadership. These are areas where complementary efforts other NGOs are working on, as far as transparency and good governance, will hopefully help," Martonova says.

Eventually OPTIONS left Kampong Trabaik and moved its activities to the Mesang and Prey Veng districts. To avoid a similar situation, OPTIONS came up with a questionnaire which looked for signals of civic leadership at both the district and commune level. These communes were then targeted, as they would have the greatest chance of success. With each commune's success came a local model that could be replicated horizontally across a district. A large number of communities were noted as having great potential for leadership should the programme scale up.

5.2 Addressing the challenge of teacher quality

Working within existing government structures presents other challenges as well. All the facilitators of the basic literacy classes are government-paid literacy or contract teachers (as opposed to 'government teachers'). Often they are older men, and they don't relate well to adolescent girls and their specific needs. Few women are members of these groups and it has been hard to find and include qualified women to play a role in the programme at the various government levels. Many government-paid literacy teachers lack commitment to teaching, Martonova says, adding that there were instances of older male teachers attending class under the influence of alcohol, or leaving for lunch five minutes after the class had began.

After two years of working directly with the Provincial Office of Education to get allocations for literacy teachers, OPTIONS was still not satisfied with the quality of the teachers they were receiving. To respond to this challenge, OPTIONS adopted a new selection process used by World Education's sister programme in Nepal called the Village Orientation Program (VOP). Based on this model, OPTIONS members now work with a small group of villagers to identify criteria for NFE facilitators. Interested villagers who match the criteria are encouraged to apply. They are selected after an interview process that involves an oral and written test.

As a result of this process, which was first tried by the OPTIONS Program in 2005, they have been able to find significantly more female literacy teachers. Once selected, OPTIONS faced the challenge of getting the PoE to accept the women as contract teachers in the formal school system and to pay their salaries. OPTIONS could have paid their salaries, but that would have increased the cost of the programme and defeated the purpose of institutionalizing it within the education system. The PoE in Prey Veng has now agreed to cover the salaries of basic literacy facilitators selected through the VOP for any future OPTIONS-supported basic literacy classes.

Martonova claims that, "if you look at the classes supported by OPTIONS now, you will more likely find a dynamic female teacher doing activities with the girls and getting them excited about learning. This does not usually happen in a typical, government-run literacy class. Finding qualified teachers for this is difficult. And we're working on building the capacity for that. It's a fine line, because, while we are trying to support the government's existing literacy programme by working with government literacy teachers, we realize that sometimes we end up compromising on the quality of learning experienced by the girls sitting in a literacy class." And, according to Kimsroeung, the challenge is only growing. As demand for the programme and its services increases, the workload is increasing.

5.3 The challenge of organizational collaboration

OPTIONS and some of its partners experienced some difficulties in learning to work together, says Sok Kimsroeung, OPTIONS Program Manager in Prey Veng. Poor communication and different working styles sometimes led to duplication of efforts in some areas. There were problems at times because different donors used different per diems to pay people. For example, school directors would naturally prefer to attend meetings or conduct activities for which they would get a higher per diem. And budgetary issues between partners were not always easy to work out. At times, compromises could be reached, but not always. "We needed to consult with each other. We needed better communication," Kimsroeung says. "But we always put the needs of the community first."

One mechanism that helped resolve some of these problems was an Annual Reflection Workshop coordinated by World Education in which all partners were invited to attend and discuss what had taken place and how to smooth over bumps in the road. "The key challenge is for everyone to coordinate better – to make sure we're not working at cross purposes or that our provincial colleagues in UNICEF are not asking our counterparts to do something different," Martonova says.

5.4 The need to strengthen micro-savings component

One other problem was raised by Ju Saila, the Cluster Director of Cheu Kach cluster in Ba Phnom district. OPTIONS has given girls knowledge and skills. However, the micro-savings component of the programme simply isn't strong enough in most cases, he says, to provide sufficient funds for enough girls to open their own shops or businesses to make use of their skills. This then raises the point that OPTIONS needs to do more work on this aspect of the programme. Recognizing and responding to this need, OPTIONS has incorporated linkages to local micro-finance institutions (MFIs) into the My Better Future design. These linkages can provide financing credit to groups of girls who save enough in their savings group to open up an account at a local MFI.

The programme's response, however, is limited by its scope and resources, and perhaps another partner is needed to help devise ways to find funding for such small enterprises. There is a danger that if the problem is not adequately addressed, some degree of lack of faith in the programme, or in learning in general, could develop. If young women gain the knowledge of how to finance businesses, but don't have the means to do so, then some might begin to wonder what the knowledge is actually worth. Ju Saila was extremely adamant and passionate that this gap in the programme needs to be addressed.

5.5 The need for continuing advocacy on girls' education

While there have been many positive outcomes from the programme, Sok Kimsroeung admits that the drop-out rates are still too high – although they are decreasing. This is true for both formal education and NFE. Nonetheless, community commitment to get more girls back in school is not always there, and sometimes the obstacles are outside of OPTIONS' control. For example, the natural disaster of a three-year drought has worsened conditions in the countryside and placed more pressure on young women to stay out of school and work, or migrate in search of work, to help support their families.

"We've tried so hard," says Ju Saila. "We've made many visits to homes to try and convince families to send their daughters back to class. But sometimes they just won't let them. They say they need them to work. I'm not sure what strategy to use with some of them at this point. But we need to get these girls an education."

5.6 Lessons learned from implementation process

OPTIONS staff has learned several lessons from the process of implementing the programme.

First is the *need to dedicate more resources to provide for psychosocial and other support needs of beneficiaries*. At the start of the programme, OPTIONS assumed its role would be purely educational. But social services at the village level are almost non-existent, and there are few, if any, qualified government staff that can be called upon for advice or guidance when a beneficiary requires assistance from a trained social worker. This means that the staff members, who are educators by training, are often required to take on social work roles for which they are ill prepared. The management team have learned that if they are to work with a vulnerable population as educators, they need to build more resources (time, people, partner NGOs, funds) into the programme to address the social service needs of the target population.

Second, is the *need to provide more supplementary assistance to beneficiaries at upper-primary and lower secondary levels*. Many of the older girls targeted by OPTIONS (14+) face tremendous pressures from their families to earn income outside the home, and this often leads to school drop-out. While scholarship assistance and curriculum enhancement activities help to keep girls in school, OPTIONS has recognized that additional support activities (through teacher mentors and peer clubs) can play a very important role in helping a girl to stay in an OPTIONS-supported programme when she is having personal difficulties. This ties back to the need for better counselling, mentoring and/or social services at the village and school level.

Perhaps the main lesson learned, according to the programme staff, is that when it comes to education mainstreaming, *there needs to be ongoing productive dialogue, coordination and collaboration between the national level, provincial level and district level during the design, implementation and evaluation of all pilot activities*. This is particularly relevant for projects that focus on a very specific target group among the school-aged population – girls and children who are recognized as being at risk and/or exploited in regards to trafficking and commercial exploitation – because the programmes designed will be very specifically focused on their needs. Thus mainstreaming will require an adaptation process that needs to involve all key education stakeholders. OPTIONS is beginning to see promising results in this area to a great extent, Martonova says, because the project design focused on working through local-level working groups while feeding information back to a national-level advisory committee. The key to success is to keep up communication channels, even if at times they appear to be paying lip service, because eventually they will pay off in terms of stakeholder readiness to work collaboratively when the time and policy climate is right.

6 Future direction

6.1 Overview

With the current phase of OPTIONS scheduled to end in August 2007, questions are naturally being raised about what direction to take in the future. Should the programme be scaled up or replicated? Is it cost effective enough to do so? Do the partners want to continue working together?

6.2 Support from the Ministry of Education

It is clear that the Ministry of Education believes OPTIONS has been beneficial and that the partnerships should be continued. "We will continue to work closely with World Education; we want to continue to have them as a partner," says Chief of Special Education Saroeun Nhean. "OPTIONS is very useful to the Cambodian situation." No official policy exists at the moment to further the programme or the partnership, but Nhean says the Ministry's Department of Primary Education is in the process of developing one in the form of an action plan. How to scale up the programme so that it covers the whole country is one aspect that is being considered. He says the ministry is already integrating the life skills education approach developed in OPTIONS into the curriculum of child-friendly schools. The fact that the programme is working with existing structures at all levels from national down to commune, is a sure sign it is sustainable, Nhean says.

6.3 Assessing the cost-effectiveness of scaling up

A key question in determining whether or not the programme can be scaled up is its cost effectiveness. Determining the precise cost of the programme per girl is difficult, and Program Director Ingrid Martonova says she could calculate that cost several different ways depending on which types of costs (including programme development and capacity-building costs) are included in the final equation. The cost of basic schooling inputs only (such as scholarship support), are US$9 per year per child. However, to facilitate the provision of scholarship assistance, OPTIONS expends a lot of resources on commune-level capacity building and technical assistance. So the cost per beneficiary is much higher depending on whether awareness-raising or capacity-building activities are included. "My understanding is that compared to other programmes we are not an expensive programme," Martonova says.

Nhean agrees with Martonova, saying that in terms of the number of girls it is reaching, the cost is not that high. His ministry has not yet been able fund a girls' education programme – although, girls are one of five target groups the ministry has specified as needing special programmes and funding. They have started funding pilot education programmes for children with disabilities and minority children. While the government budgets for those programmes are far below the OPTIONS budget (other NGOs are also involved and contributing outside funds to these programmes), he says the outputs are small compared to OPTIONS, although he did not specify how outputs were measured. As far as finding funding to scale up or continue OPTIONS, he says, "We're working with NGOs to try and get the funds."

With the PoE, OPTIONS has been sharing its approach to life skills based on its pilot Life Skills Curriculum Enhancement Program, previously implemented in 18 schools in its three target districts. The PoE, and the three DoEs where they operate, requested that the programme mainstream its LSCEP as part of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport's Local Life Skills Program in the 2006-2007 school year. This is currently taking place in all the schools in the six clusters of the three districts in Prey Veng where they work. The PoE and OPTIONS continue to dialogue and coordinate on the progress of the mainstreaming with the hope is that the model will be replicated in more districts in Prey Veng province based on lessons learned over the next school year.

However, one issue is that Cambodia's government simply does not have the funds for scaling-up, expansion or integration. Its overall government budget is highly dependent upon donors. "In a country where you have an established and working tax and revenue system, a government could fund this chiefly on their own. Cambodia does not have that now," Martonova says.

6.4 Utilizing human resources

If the money can be found, there is definite potential for replication and scaling-up. With the increasing numbers of educated girls that are coming out of the programme, whether from the formal or non-formal side, a pool of potential educators and instructors is developing. This is an important resource. Each girl employed in such a manner is a girl avoiding unsafe migration or kept out of the clutch of traffickers. Each girl participating in such a role is a girl passing on her education and experiences to many others and helping them to have a chance at a better future. These numbers are bound to grow exponentially.

Says Sok Kimsroeung, "The partners have reconvened to make a joint plan because the Provincial Office of Education and the District Offices of Education and UNICEF Education all have some activities that we can link together. For instance, UNICEF needs some girls for support groups or for counsellors, so we can work together. And they need peer educators for child-friendly schools. Seth Koma also needs qualified girls to work in some of its programmes, so we can discuss how to support each other. It's the same with the Seila Program. And some NGOs work in the same district, so we can discuss how to work together whether we are partners or not. We are building the capacity of the girls."

6.5 Continuing capacity building

OPTIONS does not see itself as a permanent outside intervention in Cambodian education. Nonetheless, its job is far from done. "Every year for our annual plan we look through our framework and we try to strengthen the capacity of the working groups so they feel a sense of ownership. We do the same for the Provincial Office of Education. So when we move to another place or area they can run it by themselves," Sok Kimsroeung says.

Vignette 2: "Now I know how to protect myself"

Son Dany isn't sure where she would be without her community. Her father died two years ago. Her mother never went to school. As the youngest of seven children, it would seem that life's odds are stacked against her. But 14-year-old Dany insists life hasn't been harder for her than for the other children of Chan Krousnar village in Prey Veng province. "Our neighbours encourage us and help us. If we need something, people in the village are there to help," she says.

Dany wants to give something back to the people in her village. She believes she can do that by becoming a teacher. With only 30 per cent of children in Prey Veng completing primary school, teachers are certainly needed if communities are to develop. Education, however, is just one of many needs. In the farming hamlets of Prey Veng, the road to adulthood is fraught with risk. Malnutrition, disease and deprivation contribute to a life expectancy of just 58 years in Cambodia, among the lowest in the region. One disease that young people are particularly vulnerable to is HIV/AIDS. The first step to preventing the spread of HIV is knowledge, and that's something Dany was able to obtain this year in a life skills class for fifth and sixth graders at her primary school. "Now I know how to protect myself," she says.

HIV has never frightened her, says Dany. There are people who live close to her home who have been infected, and although she didn't know much about the disease before taking the life skills class, her friends and neighbours have shown the same community spirit to the people living with HIV as they have to her family.

Of all the topics taught in life skills education, Dany says HIV/AIDS education has been the most interesting. "There is no medicine to cure these people, so it's very important to understand the dangers. Now I know much more. I know how it is transmitted and how to prevent it, and knowing how to prevent it will help me in the future. It's very important," she says. "But I don't worry too much because I'm still very young and am not planning to have sex yet. Not until I'm married."

Dany's concerns are more for her neighbours than herself. "Community is very important," she says. "If everyone helps each other, we can develop. I want to help my family and my community. I can teach my family and my community. I want to show my ability." Dany's dream is that one day she will be able to pass on the knowledge she has acquired to those who come after her. If she can protect her community's children, she can give something back to those who have helped her.

6.6 Responding to need

"We want to expand. We want to implement the same programmes but in different districts, different communities. Lots of girls are still at risk. People in these communities have been asking us why we aren't expanding life skills education to every school and why we aren't providing information about trafficking and migration to the whole community,'' says Kimsroeung.

Members of the community support what Sok Kimsroeung is saying. "This programme changed my life,'' says 17-year-old Pien Soporn, who is attending My Better Future in Krel Village. "I want other girls to have the same opportunity I have."

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努力

CHINA – YUNNAN

Using education to prevent trafficking of ethnic minority girls

Contents

1 Context

1.1 Overview

Located in the southwest of China, bordering Viet Nam, Lao PDR and Myanmar (Burma), and characterized by a semi-mountainous terrain, Yunnan is an easy place for border residents to move in and out of the country. With an area of 394,100 square kilometres, Yunnan is home to over 43.3 million people including 13 million from 25 respective ethnic minority groups.[1] In addition to these unique physical, geographic, and cultural characteristics, over 74 per cent of the total provincial population live in rural areas and earn a living from sustainable agriculture, farming, agriculture work or crafts, or by performing odd jobs such as picking tea leaves, collecting fire wood or conducting seasonal construction work.[2]

With increasing development and a surplus of agricultural labourers, the traditional form of economic sustenance is changing. The will of these rural populations to migrate in the hopes of gaining higher incomes and improving their meagre standards of living has increased.

1.2 Minority girls and the push to migration

The motivating factors for migration are even greater for ethnic minority girls who come from remote, impoverished areas of the province, have limited access to education, and are attracted to a city life that appears easier and more glamorous. Minority girls in these areas are especially vulnerable to trafficking.[3] Trafficking occurs because: 1) these girls do not understand the risks associated with unsafe migration; 2) they have neither economically viable employment opportunities in their local communities, nor well-developed skills to contribute to the national economy;[4] and 3) they lack support structures throughout their migration, from their departure to their destination.

1.3 From migration to trafficking

For many, migration is a positive and rewarding experience. However, uninformed and ill-prepared migration – or "blind migration" as it is often referred to in China – has created a dangerous vacuum in which human traffickers are able to exploit migrants, especially children and women.

As both a source and destination province, Yunnan is – per capita – one of China's worst affected areas of trafficking in children and women. Most trafficking takes place internally. That is to say, most movement occurs within Yunnan and into other provinces of China. However, there is some cross-border movement as well, with Thailand as the primary destination, via Lao PDR and Myanmar. Some trafficked victims from Viet Nam also end up in Yunnan.

While some victims of trafficking in Yunnan are abducted from their communities or sold to traffickers by family members, most are deceived by false promises and offers of fictitious jobs in major urban areas. Many of the victims are young women who think they are heading to a new job but are unwittingly "sold" or tricked into exploitative occupations. Often a trafficker approaches the potential victim during their voluntary migration with false offers of a job. Instead the migrants are redirected into labour and commercial sexual exploitation. Blind trust and/or a lack of knowledge about legal rights to an employment contract are aggravating factors. Trafficking for marriage also happens in China because many of the men in remote areas cannot afford the dowry required for a formal marriage.

Minority girls in Yunnan are particularly vulnerable to being trafficked into the worst forms of child labour (WFCL). In some cases traffickers come to the village and trick the family into sending the daughter away. "In my village trafficking in the past has been a big problem; I personally know three of the four girls who had been trafficked. Strangers came to our village, talked to people and took girls away with them," said 16-year-old student Yu Nan Feng, who lives in a small village 4 km away from No. 3 Middle School in Menghai County.

1.4 Initial responses and ongoing challenges

To address the issues of labour exploitation and trafficking, ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) launched the Mekong Project to Combat Trafficking in Children and Women (TICW) in March 2000[5], with the UK Department for International Development (DFID) as the main donor. The project covers five countries in the Mekong subregion, including China, and supports preventive measures including the promotion of safe migration channels. Within China, the project works in four counties in Yunnan Province, Jiangcheng, Menghai, Menglian and Yuanyang. In Yunnan, the focus of the project is almost exclusively on internal trafficking within China, both on trafficking within Yunnan (i.e. from rural areas to urban areas, with members of minorities featuring significantly among those trafficked) and between Yunnan and other parts of China. Jiangcheng County (Simao City) and Menghai County have the highest incidence of internal and cross-border trafficking in Yunnan – and therefore have been identified as focal areas for the ILO-TICW project activities). Sending areas covered also include Simao and Honghe Prefectures. Kunming City is the main receiving centre within the Yunnan Province.

During the first phase (2000 to 2003) of ILO-TICW, the project focused on implementing a series of cascading trainings that reached far beyond their initial target beneficiaries. Wang Young, responsible for projects in the Menghai County Education Bureau, explains, "The ILO Project trained us. We then trained 100 school-heads [in the counties]; then these 100 taught 300 key teachers; these teachers then reached thousands of students." During the initial phase, the Education Bureaus in both Jiangcheng and Menghai counties conducted training on trafficking prevention and safe migration, promoting official, regulated migration channels. Anti-trafficking was made a compulsory subject in all primary and secondary schools.[6] As a result of these efforts, blind migration dropped significantly in Jiangcheng County particularly in the target townships during the initial phase 2001 to 2003.

1.5 Educational situation exacerbates the problem

In spite of these activities, by the end of Phase 1, communities – and girls in particular – had limited knowledge of trafficking risks and little knowledge of how to access economically viable activities in their own areas. This is because even though local capacity had been built, many girls were not in school to receive the messages.

Below is a summary of the primary and secondary enrolment rates for ethnic minority girls and boys.

Table 1: Enrolment rates for ethnic minority children

County	Population	Minority Girls	Minority Boys	Primary Girls Enrolment Rate	Primary Boys Enrolment Rate	Lower Secondary Girls Enrolment Rate	Lower Secondary Boys Enrolment Rate
Menghai	254,372	13,932	14,619	96.20%	97.30%	48.00%	53.00%
Yuanyang	321,328	36,708	51,271	98.46%	98.83%	74.52%	76.85%
Jiangcheng	86,500	13,600	14,100	99.70%	99.90%	80.20%	80.60%
Menglian	97,033	14,875	15,698	98.20%	98.90%	72.10%	73.00%

The TICW project designers identified the educational situation as neglecting, and even exacerbating, the remaining root causes of trafficking vulnerability. Access to education – for example, in the form of distance to schools and the costs of education – is a major barrier to education for children of poor families in the remote areas of Yunnan Province. Further, the lack of access to quality education has a greater affect on girls than on boys. Normally, after completing primary education, those ethnic minority girls who do not continue to middle school, or who drop out in the process, are not immediately trafficked into WFCL. Rather, as daughters, their parents expect that they will contribute to the household by doing chores. As is the case in many countries around the world, when faced with limited resources and many financial demands, parents prefer to invest in the education of their sons and not lose their daughters' vital contribution to the household economy. After a few years, many of these girls aspire to what they perceive as a better, more exciting and more prosperous life. They migrate either to the city or to a neighbouring country at the age of 15 or 16 years. Factors which explain the desire to leave village life include no awareness of risk in migration, the lack of knowledge about human rights, and media images portraying city life as attractive and luxurious. There are cases of early pregnancy, for example, where teenage mothers migrate to earn remittance to send to their babies back home. However, most often these young women become vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation or other worse forms of child labour, and only have enough funds to support themselves.

The system was characterized as lacking the following for at-risk ethnic minority girls:

- **Quality of education:** The education system in Yunnan did not address relevant subjects such as public health concerns, HIV/AIDS, gender equity, or the dangers of trafficking (and the life skills that would equip one to respond well to migration). Teachers often had to endure poor working conditions and had insufficient training to impart lessons on these topics.
- **Relevance of education:** Education was not responsive to the socio-economic realities and needs of ethnic minority girls. The educational system needed to be more linked to local labour market needs. Parents began to lose faith in the education system as a means of ensuring future employment for their children.
- **Cultural sensitivity of education:** Education did not celebrate the differences that exist in ethnic minority communities, and did not put things within the local cultural context or through cultural examples that would increase the impact of the messages.

2 Programme description

2.1 Overview

The TICW project sought to address the challenges of trafficking of ethnic minority girls by implementing a comprehensive and multifaceted educational pilot project that leveraged existing capacity, and addressed each of the educational deficiencies outlined above (access, quality, relevance, cultural sensitivity and skills training) in a holistic manner. To this end the Spring Bud Program was implemented, with three central pillars to address the trafficking of girls in Yunnan province.

2.1.1 Pillar 1: Increasing access to education for ethnic minority girls

Scholarships were granted to 800 ethnic minority girls aged 12 to 15 years. This meant that 200 girls in each of the four counties were given the opportunity to further their studies beyond elementary school. Direct assistance was given for transportation, boarding costs and/or other school fees. The girls were screened by members of the Educational Bureau to ensure that they satisfied the basic criteria of vulnerability: families unable – or unwilling – to provide the funds necessary for their girls to go to school. The girls received in-kind provisions for books and other materials, as well as room and board where appropriate. This was an extension of an earlier successful model.

2.1.2 Pillar 2: Improving the quality of education

Quality improvement was achieved using socially, economically and culturally appropriate modules, which were communicated through the participatory methods of an ILO programme called Supporting Children's Rights through Education, the Arts and the Media (SCREAM).[7] The training on this approach focused on topics neglected in the standard curriculum, but ones that applied directly to the vulnerabilities faced by ethnic minority girls. Through deep-learning pedagogical methodologies, such as drama, creative writing and art, SCREAM introduces young people to the complexities surrounding the issue of child labour, and helps them to develop appropriate responses and to channel their creative energy in a positive and constructive way. SCREAM programmes were designed using interactive approaches and encouraged active involvement through the sharing of views and experiences, role playing, discussions, and debates among the participants This method made education more relevant, easy to grasp and culturally sensitive.

New teaching modules were developed and delivered on the following topics:

- **Trafficking risks:** including what a trafficker might say in the village to coerce a family, and how a girl could be trafficked on her way to the city or while already there.
- **General life skills:** including public health knowledge, HIV/AIDS-prevention strategies, and negotiation skills.
- **Vocational training:** including hospitality training.
- **Gender equity:** Modules on equity between genders ran across all other topics and the theme was revisited and reinforced throughout. "Gender equality was integrated into the trainings wherever appropriate," says Mr. Ye Donghai, Director of the Menghai Education Bureau. "It was one of the outstanding features of this project, because in (East) Asia and South-East Asia girls are usually viewed as inferior to men. This project changed that perspective, and girls' confidence has been impacted in a positive way as result."

2.1.3 Pillar 3: Building community momentum for replication in other areas of China

Leveraging on the successfully-completed Phase I of ILO-TICW and the capacity that was built through its duration (2000 to 2003), the Spring Bud educational programme focused on extending beyond the direct project beneficiaries to developing communities into prevention and support systems. The project actively enrolled government stakeholders, and reached out to other members of China's Educational Bureau both at the provincial and national levels. "As Yunnan Provincial Education Department already trained the head teachers on the content, the environment was primed and responsive to the new methods," says Ms. Zhu Huie, Project Coordinator, ILO Yunnan.

Though not funded by the project, other departments contributed to improving the overall policy environment. While the education departments were responsible for teaching the girls, the women's federations took on the task of building community capacity, the Yunnan Provincial Women's Federation made a key contribution to the overall capacity in developing the 'Knowledge Brochure of Trafficking Prevention' and the 'Safe Migration Brochure.' The four county Education Bureaus developed vocational skills handbooks for girls and community members and conducted the training, including: agricultural extension (tea cropping – both planting and harvesting – and animal husbandry), craft design, small business training[8], and hospitality skills.

Finally, the ILO-TICW conducted a number of smaller initiatives which focused on "spreading the word" about the project: ILO-TICW produced a short documentary on the good practices and lessons learned, translated and distributed copies of the SCREAM curriculum, and financed participants to share in a experience sharing meeting. These activities were undertaken in order to build momentum for replication in other parts of China.

The communities were also exposed to the messages of the project through the SCREAM programme, outlined below in section 2.4.

2.2 Financial contributions

The programme to prevent the trafficking of ethnic minority girls in the four Yunnan counties of Jiangcheng, Menghai, Menglian and Yuanyang began in March of 2004 and continued until December 2005 with funding from the Government of Netherlands. Activities, however, were ongoing, officially lasting until March 2007. The Dutch government contributed US$160,000 broken down into US$40,000 grants to each of the four Yunnan Province target communities; local counties for their own part contributed some US$121,000 of in kind contributions (labour time, materials). This was implemented within the framework of the DFID-funded ILO-TICW, which provided the staff, institutional framework (along with Training of Trainers), production of manuals and a documentary on good practices.

One of the particularly outstanding aspects of the project was how the four counties themselves made these significant financial contributions to the project. "When these stakeholders became convinced of the efficacy of the model, they really took it on," commented Urmila Sarkar, Child Labor and Education Specialist for the ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and architect of the project. For instance, Menglian County donated over RMB 239,000 (US$30,000) to local primary and secondary schools. The County Financial Bureau also promised a yearly fund allocation of RMB 150,000 (US$18,750) to cover the living cost of poor students. In 2005 in Yuanyang County, the donation reached RMB 928,000 (US$116,000).[9]

2.3 Programme beneficiaries

The direct beneficiaries of the project were the 800 girls who were given scholarships and an additional 3,600 girls who received copies of the 'Practical Agriculture Training Manual' produced by the project. Over 65 educators and administrators were trained in topics on and related to trafficking, and on the SCREAM methodology. This exceeded the expected number of 40 by 25 educators, due to interest on the part of the teachers. In Menghai County, over 1,000 copies of 'Children's Composition against Trafficking' were distributed; an additional 1,550 students in grade 1 and 3,650 students in various other grades at six project middle schools benefited from SCREAM teaching methods. The aim was to prove both success in replication and draw lessons learned by providing support to 200 girls and four schools for each target county.

2.4 Innovation through participatory approaches and SCREAM

This unique set of educational topics enjoyed even more impact given how it was taught: in ways that encouraged participation and contribution from all levels, and which were receptive to input and modification given the specific socio-cultural realities on the ground. In fact, stakeholders at all ends of the spectrum – from the policy architects at the top to the 12-year-old girls receiving the training – identified to the review team that the project's many participatory methodologies were the single most important aspect of the project.

Table 2: Spring Bud beneficiaries[12]

Spring Bud Beneficiary Map		Beneficiaries					
No.	Title	Direct Assistance		Capacity Building		Awareness Raising	
		Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual
Spring Bud Program							
	Preventing and combating the trafficking of ethnic minority girls through education in Jiangcheng County	200	1,200	10	10		(tbd)
	Preventing and combating the trafficking of ethnic minority girls through education in Menghai County	200	1,200	10	20		6,200
	Preventing and combating the trafficking of ethnic minority girls through education in Menglian County	200	1,000	10	25		(tbd)
	Preventing and combating the trafficking of ethnic minority girls through education in Yuanyang County	200	1,000	10	10		(tbd)
	Sub-total	**800**	**4,400**	**40**	**65**		**6,200**[13]

The SCREAM model sat at the centre of these interactive approaches. SCREAM is an ILO-developed educational approach designed to empower young people by giving them a forum to contribute their thoughts about child labour in a combined effort to halt its spread.[10] SCREAM, a set of modules available for download[11], was translated and adapted by Yunnan's Education Bureau and was used during the Bureau's training of 40 headmasters and key teachers. SCREAM consists of progressive interactive sessions where children not only receive information, but get to internalize and synthesize that information by reproducing it for themselves and for others in various forms. These other forms include role-play/skit, song, drama production, dance, and games. Li Yue, teacher at No.3 Middle School describes the project: "The games method helps teach sensitive subjects and overall makes my job easier after we've done the initial work getting the kids thinking, getting them comfortable with skits."

Ms. Li's sentiments were echoed by numerous teachers in interviews which were recorded in project documents and conducted by the review team. Teachers described how SCREAM helps them teach class and obtain better results and how their students find material more fun and impacting. Ms. Zhu notes that the way the teachers have embraced the new structure is in itself fairly extraordinary: "This is quite a radical departure in methodology, as traditionally education in China focused on discipline and information dissemination through lecturing." This came at a good time since the country has been going through a process of curriculum reform and the methodologies and content developed through this programme are being considered for integration province-wide.

Vignette 1: We teach what we learn

Lu Cong cong, a 15-year-old Akha minority girl who lives 'at the door of the school,' is nothing short of precocious. The only child of parents who scrimp by on odd jobs, Cong cong aspires to be a clothing designer when she grows up – and she sees education as a critical way of attaining her dream. "Many of my friends work picking tea, or at home doing household chores; most of them are very poor, have many siblings, and have little opportunity. All they know is tea, or cleaning dishes. The programme has given us girls the opportunity to know more than that."

Cong cong also lists the other benefits of the programme; illustrating how the participatory approaches and the SCREAM methodology have provided myriad benefits. "The project provides support so that girls like me are not trafficked. First, it educates us; second it educates the community; third, we learn skills and useful things; fourth, we gain confidence; fifth, we have fun."

While Cong cong's fifth reason may not directly prevent trafficking, the fact that the programme provides "fun" activities – in the form of skits, singing, arts and crafts, and games – has real repercussions: "The advantage of the programme is that it allows us to repeat what we've learned. We will learn something, and begin to understand it, but when we do the skits we really understand." The skits have the additional benefit of demonstrating the wide-ranging impact of this project. Cong cong reports that when the girls hold the performances – which are comprised of both skits meant to educate the community on issues like gender equity, the importance of education, and the dangers of trafficking – they bundle them with traditional dances. "People come by the hundreds from far away. The common people come because they watch many soap operas on TV, and watching it in person is so much better."

Entertainment lures community members in, and they leave with knowledge of the social issues facing their community as well as with knowledge about the project: "The community is aware of our project," Cong cong says proudly, "We teach them what we learn."

2.5 SCREAM in the communities

As part of the project, the girls were encouraged to take SCREAM and their skits, dances and songs to their communities. While teachers and administrators helped facilitate these sessions, the girls took it upon themselves to hold the sessions, and continue to do so on weekends or on holidays, often without prompting. According to local farmers, the students also deliver actual trainings to the communities. "The girls taught us how to raise pigs and goats," said Li Bin ming, a farmer in a village 20 kms outside of Xishuangbanna.

2.6 Participation in curriculum development and monitoring and evaluating

Finally "students got to contribute their feedback and advice," says Ms. Zhu. "And from there, the teachers were allowed to revise the curriculum." Teachers described the increased feelings of ownership and empowerment at being able to respond to the specific needs of their students. In addition, administrators told the review team about their feelings of empowerment to change educational curricula and systems. Mr. Wang of the Education Bureau in Menghai County took the personal initiative to expand the programme to a third township.

A partnership workshop was held in Simao City on 15-17 June 2005, which brought together administrators, officials and teachers from many levels to refine the Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation tools developed under the TICW project.[14] The refined tools were adapted and then tested in target schools and communities.

3 Process

3.1 Provincial Women's Federation partners with the Education Bureau

In China, protecting the legal rights of children and women, and combating human trafficking is a key area of work which falls under the purview of the Women's Federation. The ILO worked with the Yunnan Provincial Women's Federation to establish a project plan, a steering committee and a project management office (PMO).

The Women's Federation in Yunnan identified the Education Bureau as the most appropriate stakeholder in delivering trainings on trafficking, vocational and life skills for youth, and public health trainings. Thus, the PMO partnered with the Education Bureau, and facilitated the delivery of technical assistance through the ILO-TICW project. Consultants trained the teachers, who in turn trained other teachers and then students.

The Yunnan Provincial Women's Federation, for their part, focused more closely on communities and adult vocational training. In Ximeng County of Simao City, for instance, the Women's Federation, through the ILO-TICW, facilitated 8,232 persons/times of agriculture skill trainings – which exceeded the original goal of reaching 6,200 persons/times by 32.8 per cent.[15] In a related project, the Women's Federation got women involved in building their own businesses: 145 young women were given five days of training during which they visited wholesale markets, a processing factory of ethnic minority art crafts and an agricultural produce market, and learned how to run indigenous businesses. Synergies between the education programme and the work of ILO-TICW in general ensured greater impact.

3.2 Engaging broader government participation with SCREAM

The PMO also enrolled other relevant bureaus into the project – 14 in total in Yunnan Province, including the Judicial, Law, Police, and Agricultural Bureaus – the heads of which signed off on their bureau's participation in the project. The PMO then facilitated training on relevant topics surrounding migration, trafficking, equity, and life skills to staff members of the relevant trainings. Once staff capacity was built, the County Education Bureau would invite members of these other bureaus to visit the class to deliver targeted trainings to students on the role of their respective bureaus in society. For instance, a member of the Police Bureau came and taught the girls about how to dial the emergency number if they are ever trafficked. Something as simple as knowledge of what to do when in danger was not common knowledge to many of the target beneficiaries, and many expressed gratitude at the way the project increased their scope and understanding of their society.

Each week a class typically had a minimum of one 45-minute SCREAM session where trafficking, gender equality, and job-location skills were addressed from different angles. For instance, in regards to "trafficking," one session would involve a lesson by the teacher on the risks of blind migration, and then a guest speaker from the Labor Department would tell the students how they could register with the government Labor and Employment Service Center to recruit safely if they choose to. In another session on trafficking, a member from the Agriculture Bureau would tell the girls what economic opportunities were available to them in their own communities.

This format remained flexible and responsive to the specific local environments. For instance, Ms. Zhu reported how in Yuanyang County the teachers decided to conduct class on the playground where a particular kind of grass grew. The teachers used this grass to make handicrafts, and developed a small pilot project on how to develop and sell a product. "The project allowed the teachers to utilize their own cultural realities and their own creativity to increase impact," added Ms. Zhu.

3.3 Unique structure affects impact on indirect beneficiaries of project

The project used a method of cascading trainings where recipients of training were also responsible and/or given the opportunity to in-turn train others in the same topic. In this way, the project reached out to the bureaus, trained them, and got them to come back to deliver a set of trainings that had more impact than the PMO could have delivered on its own. This structure was particularly important for the long-lasting impact of the project to transcend the benefits delivered to the 800 girls of the primary target group, as the capacity of the bureau staff was built, and messages on project topics were delivered through other non-formal channels.

3.4 The role of ILO-TICW

- **Human resources support:** TICW staff provided necessary back-stopping for the Spring Bud Program by supporting the Menghai, Jiangcheng, Menglian and Yuanyang County Education Bureaus. Ex-TICW partners served as technical resources for the other main partners, namely the staff of the Education Department/Bureaus and the county-level Women's Federations; current TICW partners served as resource persons to assist in gender equality teaching programme at schools. The Kunming Office worked as a supporting office at the provincial level to the county partners. The Kunming Office also recieved technical support from Bangkok on project implementation including the education programme.
- **Financial inputs:** TICW provided US$14,200 to train 40 teachers, headmasters and staff of County Education Bureaus on SCREAM methodology, and printed 300 copies of SCREAM in Chinese. TICW also provides US$8,800 to produce a documentary for replicating the Spring Bud Program's good experiences to aid in advocacy and replicabiilty. The project also provided support for 25 stakeholders (20 beneficiaries and five partners) to attend the Experiences Sharing and Replication Meeting of Mekong Subregional Project to Combat Trafficking in Children and Women on 17-19 May 2006, for the purpose of sharing and replicating the positive experiences of the Spring Bud Program.

4 Outcomes

4.1 Project outputs

At the end of the project the following outputs were realized:

- Direct assistance supported three years of lower secondary education for 800 girls.
- 65 educators received capacity-building training on SCREAM methodology and anti-trafficking lessons and techniques.
- 25 partners attended an Experiences Sharing and Replication Meeting of Mekong Subregional Project to Combat Trafficking in Children and Women.
- A documentary was shot and produced about positive lessons from the Spring Bud Program and distributed amongst 129 counties in Yunnan Province.[16]
- 300 copies of SCREAM were translated into Chinese and distributed to education points.
- Instructional handbooks on six topics (trafficking, vocational training, life skills, gender equity, law & rights and working conditions) were produced and distributed.
- Girls of Spring Bud classes were trained in the following topics: agricultural extension (cultivation skills in growing rice, corn, tea, fruit, and off-season vegetables); animal husbandry (livestock breeding and fisheries); home appliance repair; and domestic service and handicraft production.

4.2 Immediate outcomes

- **Access** to education was provided to 800 disadvantaged ethnic minority girls across four counties; these girls would not have been able to attend middle school without the scholarships. All 800 girls remained in school for three years. They were provided with direct assistance for transportation and/or board/housing costs, as well as other school fees (pencils, notebooks, etc.) necessary to conduct education. Through testimonials and anecdotes, various stakeholders reflected that the girls' increased their confidence and assertiveness. These students are being encouraged to return to their villages and promote awareness about the importance of education and the dangers of trafficking.
- **Quality and relevance** of education improved: Integrating awareness about the risks of trafficking and HIV/AIDS addressed a real danger, both in the village and in the city. Vocational and hospitality trainings addressed the economic realities of the village and allowed the girls to better communicate with Mandarin-speaking people. Public health and life skills gave the girls tools to handle their changing environment.

- **Gender equity:** Gender equity focus empowered the girls, making them put more emphasis on themselves and their own education. This behaviour-change focus addressed the gender gap in China; gender equity is a concept that is still very new, especially in remote areas.
- **Training in participatory methods:** The project trained teachers and administrators in interactive teaching methods (SCREAM) who then passed on the knowledge to other educators not involved with the programme. "I received general participatory methods training once by the school director, and had many other sessions with the director and other teachers on specific module topics," says teacher Chen Jing hua. "We teachers have created an internal support structure to answer any questions we have, share good strategies. I will continue to use these methods, because they are more effective than the traditional ones. I will also use the techniques for other subjects because they make the message more impacting."

4.3 Project impact

Project impact denotes longer-term effects on its direct beneficiaries, as well as the benefits experienced by indirect beneficiaries, which all had consequences for the project to gain momentum on its own to sustain outside of the confines of the project period and scope.

4.3.1 Long-term effects

- Anecdotal evidence and small independent studies have indicated that the trafficking of girls has decreased, and girls' ability to protect themselves has increased. A thorough evaluation of tracking trafficking statistics has not yet been completed, but villages visited by the review team had a reduction in trafficking numbers. Sun Chung village decreased from 20 girls in 2000 to only four in 2006. This is mainly because girls understand the risks now. According to student Yu Nan Feng, "I personally know three of the four girls who had been trafficked. Strangers came to our village and talked to people; now we know to not trust what they are saying."
- Through participatory educational methods, the project dramatically increased the confidence and self-reliance of ethnic minority girls. "Change is clearly visible in the girls," says teacher Li Yue. "They are no longer willing to do small menial jobs; they have more skills, and when they go looking for job they are looking for jobs that can make use of their skills."
- Trained teachers passed on their knowledge of SCREAM to other educators not involved with the programme. "I have even told my friend at Zhu Hai College, who liked it so much, he is considering adding it to his university curriculum," says Li Yue. This demonstrates both how the project has begun to grow on its own, as well as how others not initially a part of the project are benefiting.
- Livelihoods increased and vocational capacity was built: farmers who participated in the project enjoyed gains across the board. Pig farmers' per capita income, for instance, has increased more than RMB 380. More importantly, the agriculture bureaus of Simao City and Honghe Prefecture have completed capacity-building trainings to 167 agriculture leaders and agriculture extension workers. These agriculturalists in turn have continued to train others, increasing capacity in the villages.

4.3.2 Long-term impact on communities

- Raising community members' awareness of trafficking and gender equity issues in villages and towns through plays and skits performed by girls attending the programme. Girls disseminated the knowledge that they had learned through the project to their immediate families and friends by sharing the curriculum and its contents, and to the community at large through SCREAM-based performances, skits, etc.
- Building government bureau capacity in understanding issues related to trafficking. These employees and their staff have now been exposed to these issues.

- Raising the influence of the Women's Federation in the local government structure and within the local communities. The project provided a point of entry for the work of Women's Federations at all levels to further raise awareness of gender equity issues by conducting educational and vocational trainings along with participating in designing the curriculum for the ethnic minority girls.
- Increasing the status of women in many different contexts. According to Qie Biao, whose 12-year-old daughter came from the project, many people come and watch the shows, especially women, because it makes them "realize that they are equal". She went on to comment that the "household itself actually changed: the status of the women increased".
- The combination of SCREAM and the word-of-mouth excitement generated by both the Spring Bud Program and the trainings and presentations given by the girls themselves, as well as by the capacity built by the first phase of the TICW programme, effectively resulted in an overall increase in primary and secondary school enrolment, particularly the latter since the education programme was targeting girls entering or in the initial years of lower secondary education in the target counties.

Table 3: Changes in primary and secondary enrolment rates (2002-2004)[17]

Year		County			
		Menghai	Yuanyang	Jiangcheng	Menglian
Primary Enrolment Rate	2002	98.10%	98.50%	n/a	99.00%
	2004	99.25%	98.6%	n/a	99.30%
	% change	**1.24%**	**0.10%**		**0.30%**
Secondary Enrolment Rate*	2002	70.41%	55.10%	83.10%	83.20%
	2004	86.41%	83.25%	103.70%	103.60%
	% change	**16.00%**	**30.25%**	**20.60%**	**20.40%**

* Gross enrolment rate

5 Analysis

5.1 The challenge of reaching indirect beneficiaries

The cascading method of training ensured that messages about trafficking, equity and public health reached literally thousands of beneficiaries. While ethnic minority girls received direct benefits from many sources, their peers and classmates, their teachers and administrators, and even their communities at large were all impacted. Due to the "cascading" nature of the successive Training of Teachers sessions, the techniques and information taught to those at the top of the project effectively made their way to those further downstream, often times through many different channels.

5.2 The challenge of finding community support

Sensitization of parents and community members in general on the risks of trafficking and the importance of education proved difficult. The project addressed this problem in two ways: the first was to provide activities and services which directly benefited community members. For instance, according to the breakdown of stakeholder responsibilities, the education departments focused on formal education of girls and the Women's Federation focused on informal education of adults. The local-level Women's Federation provided vocational trainings to community members providing tangible ways for parents and neighbours of the girls to benefit.

The second way the project found community support was by providing information about the project topics from many different stakeholders; not only did the Women's Federation provide trainings, but the girls provided information through the cultural events, the general curriculum was affected, and members of government bureaus became aware. As Lao Min Bing, a farmer in Menghai County, told the review team, "everyone knows about the project".

5.3 The challenge of achieving sustainability

Due to its nature as a relatively short-term pilot project, sustainability was a concern from the beginning. The project responded by building institutional capacity of both educational and government bureaus, and by writing policy briefs and papers to be integrated into the curricula at the provincial level.

However, the project will be sustainable perhaps only as long as a system is introduced to provide continuous training and a way of updating the curriculum. Stakeholders repeatedly expressed concern that without updates the project would grow stagnant, and the skills at employing the SCREAM methodologies would grow rusty.

Although there is now increased commitment and resources in China towards ensuring nine-year basic education (including lower secondary education), the challenge – which this programme has responded to – is to ensure that the most disadvantaged children in remote areas are targeted. In order to maintain the high level of access that has been achieved, local authorities or other agencies will need to continue providing scholarships for minority girls to continue attending school at such high rates. Measures to ensure sustainability were embedded in certain ways in the project, though, as outlined below.

5.3.1 New methodologies adopted by institutions and individuals

Educators have integrated both the messages and the methodologies into their curricula; SCREAM methodology has been integrated into other aspects of the curriculum. "Programmatically speaking, now that the Education Department has been exposed to the new teaching methods and put them in practice, the programme can continue without as much financial support," says Mr. Wang, the head of the Menghai Education Department. Li Yue, a teacher using the SCREAM methodology, said "We have even altered our tests to include the new SCREAM modules."

5.3.2 Capacity built

On many levels capacity was built to respond to trafficking problems: girls have become empowered to defend themselves and teach their communities; the communities in turn have become aware of the problems facing the girls and have become a more active participant in their protection. This increases the ability of communities to protect themselves from trafficking, and to continue investing in their own education, even without additional funds.

5.3.3 New relationships built

The education departments and women's federation organizations forged a relationship wherein the Education Bureau received funding for training in topics relate to trafficking and gender equity; the Women's Federation on the other hand gained access to many more communities and were able to participate in educational projects of ILO for the first time

The county-level Women's Federations and the communities developed a clearer set of relationships wherein community members – particularly women – learned of the resources in vocational training and women's rights available at the Women's Federation. As mentioned above, the Women's Federation for its part expanded its reach into many ethnic minority communities never before accessed, and was able to fulfil its mandate of educating and empowering women at the grass roots level.

Teachers and their students have drastically altered their working relationships to the point where teachers and students interviewed separately by the review team independently described their respective interaction as one of "big friend, little friend".

Vignette 2: Advocacy and positive potential in the Provincial Education Department

Mr. Zhao Derong has worked in the education sector his entire career. After graduating from university, Mr. Zhao worked on advocacy for basic education, and then moved to the Basic Education Division for compulsory education and illiteracy elimination, where he was involved in many international cooperation programmes concerning elementary education. In this project he is the Project Coordinator designated by Yunnan Provincial Education Department.

Mr. Zhao highlights the positive results from the innovative aspects of the project:

"Past projects did not address the student's real needs, or the motivation of the students, but this one is quite comprehensive. The project has many different components (health, poverty alleviation, education), and the quality of teaching and the special activities have pulled kids into school." Mr. Zhao notes that increased relevance has increased enrolment not just for the 800 girls supported, but for non-scholarship students, who now enjoy more relevant education

Mr. Zhao also mentions the participatory methods of education, running through all aspects of project, as being particularly innovative. "I attended the replication meeting last month and noticed that all the students were actively participating in the meeting by producing dramas themselves. The students were open, had good attitudes, and were willing to learn with smiling faces. That these changes extend to remote areas is amazing. The students debate with me, I asked a girl what is her wish. I told her that this is impossible, that there will be many hindrances, and then she used her argument to remove the hindrance I mentioned." Zhao described being deeply affected by the methods demonstrated by the youth, and by their increased confidence: "Now, when conducting lessons to students, teachers and their colleagues I allow students some room to think on their own, do some creative writing. This is very new in China."

Zhao points out that while his Provincial Education Department is responsible for mainstreaming, "this process might take time, and we cannot simply issue policy papers to promote the project impact. In the process of mainstreaming, human resources are very important, and it's a must to train the headmasters and teachers and staff of relevant departments of other counties. Throughout the implementing process of the project, I was happy to see that the government and department leaders became aware of the importance of education and relevant programme. This shows the work of awareness raising leads to positive results, which is essential in promoting mainstreaming." Zhao himself, through his active advocacy, demonstrates the affect the project has on its proponents, and thus its potential for both replicability and sustainability. "If we focus on more teachers the impact will be far-reaching and long-lasting for students and teachers both."

Mr. Zhao finished by indicating that it's important to share good experiences among different cooperative projects in the area of basic education: "In our office, we work with other international organizations like UNICEF and UNESCO, and many of their other projects also deal with girls' education. We are dedicated to implement the participatory method into the others."

5.3.4 Government and partner support

A significant amount of money and in-kind (time) commitment was made by many different stakeholders in various government agencies. There was further support from regional levels, such as from Mr. Zhao, the Yunnan Education responsible person who demonstrated commitment and continued advocacy for the project at inter-agency meetings: "We work with…UNICEF and UNESCO and…we are dedicated to implement the participatory methods into [our other projects]." Further, the upper levels of the Education Bureau have begun mainstreaming many of the systems. Mr. Zhao described the formation of an intra-agency Q&A network where "young, energetic employees" can learn more about trafficking prevention.

6 Future direction

6.1 Overview

The project focused on replicability of the initiative from the beginning, and stakeholders at local and provincial levels demonstrated commitment to expanding the project even after its completion. Yunnan Provincial Project Steering Committee held a project Experiences Sharing and Replication Meeting on 17-19 May 2006 in Kunming. The good experiences of the Spring Bud Program were shared at the meeting.

Mr. Zhao Derong, responsible for the project from the Provincial Education Department, described the systems in place to build the model, "We have designed activities to absorb the good experiences from the project. First, the project taught us how we must prioritize the target counties. Second, through evaluating the trainings we know how to replicate the teaching methods, and we have taken the best practices from around the province in this regard. Third, we have come up with ways to communicate our lessons: we have written policy papers, M&E [monitoring and evaluation] reports, and designed VCDs for distribution." One of the VCDs demonstrates the project, its lessons learned, and the consequent curriculum reform.

The programme was also featured during the Global EFA High Level Group Meeting in Beijing in November 2005 in order to share the experiences with other countries. This was done to both link strongly to China's efforts to achieve nine-year compulsory basic education and to the wider global efforts to achieve gender parity and equality in education by 2015.

Building on this model, future action can include increasing the number of qualified teachers from ethnic minority backgrounds in these areas and providing the opportunity for the government to consider adding on middle school classes to primary schools or exploring mobile approaches to education.

6.2 Policy mainstreaming in Yunnan

'The Recommendations to Improve the Work to Prevent and Combat Trafficking Crime in Children and Women' was issued on 23 August 2005 as a policy paper to prevent trafficking in Yunnan Province. Beyond the ILO-TICW accomplishments and other such endeavours, this policy identifies respective responsibilities of government agencies, including strengthening the internal and international cooperation to combat trafficking crime in children and women, in order to combat cross-border human trafficking crime. Details are as follows:

- Public security departments should strengthen the leadership and support to the lower level; guide the lower level to manage and offer better service for migrants flowed into city and towns in key districts, key communities and key departments; create conditions and solve problems for the lower level to combat trafficking in crime in children and women.
- Justice departments should prioritize legal literacy of laws and regulations to prevent and combat trafficking crime in children and women; take effective actions to strengthen the work of legal literacy and advocacy education for rural young women, children, parents and migrants in cities to raise their awareness on laws and trafficking prevention.
- Civil departments should integrate preventing and combating trafficking crime in children and women into community construction; research and develop relevant relief policy; and integrate the following into relief policy of governments at all levels: support rescued women and children to rehabilitate into the normal social life.
- Education departments should integrate trafficking prevention into laws, regulations and quality education work at schools; carry out knowledge education on preventing and combating trafficking so as to raise students' awareness on self-independence, trafficking prevention and laws.
- Labour departments should research and improve the policy on labour migration; regulate the management on labour migration; highlight the work on vocational skill trainings, employment management and labour right protection for women migrants in cities.

- Industry and commerce departments should carry out advocacy education work for employers, and mobilize them to take an active part in preventing and combating trafficking crime in children and women.
- Ethnic affairs committees, trade unions, youth leagues and women's federations should cooperate with relevant government agencies to carry out advocacy education work to prevent and combat trafficking in target areas and raise awareness on responsibility and law for household heads.
- Traffic departments should cooperate actively with public security organizations to check-up, stop and rescue, etc.

6.3 Monitoring and evaluation results in expansion potential

During the project monitoring in the four counties, the PMO discovered various similarities and differences amongst them. According to Ms. Zhu, for instance, Yuangyuan County suffers from poverty, and hence the opportunity cost of education becomes salient for girls not attending school. Menghai, on the other hand, suffers from drop-outs; but its economic development is relatively advanced, and so different responses are necessary. "The factor leading to drop-outs is not only poverty; the quality of teaching must also improve." Ms. Zhu implied that because the project is so holistic in its approaches, it has been able to address the different challenges of different communities. This flexibility has significant consequences for its reliability.

6.4 Expansion of pilot to other provinces

According to Ms. Sarkar of the ILO, the fact that the project displayed success in four counties indicates the high potential for replicability. Further, Sarkar notes that the counties themselves demonstrated differences in socio-economic conditions and in their initial enrolment rates for girls and so the project has demonstrated success in different contexts.

These positive experiences of Yunnan will be showcased as a model which the national and provincial governments will use as guidance. Moreover, the ILO's Project to Prevent Trafficking in Girls and Young Women for Labor Exploitation within China has utilized the Yunnan model in their work to prevent the trafficking of girls in the sending provinces of Anhui, Henan and Hunan.

6.5 Replicability in other countries

Although there are some factors that make the gains specific to the Chinese context, such as the vast commitment and contributions by the government bureaus which a poorer country might not be able to match, the successes of the project can generally be applied to other countries.

This programme has developed an effective blue-print for other countries seeking to address trafficking problems through education. The cascading trainings and interactive approaches have involved thousands of people in the project and created a set of systems that can affect- directly and indirectly – tens of thousands more.

Endnotes

1 Yunnan Provincial Statistics Bureau, (2000).

2 Ibid.

3 UN Office on Drugs and Crime, *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children*, (2007). Summary available at: http://www.unodc.org/unodc/trafficking_convention.html.

4 Many ethnic minorities have their own languages and do not have mastery of, or sometimes even exposure to, Mandarin.

5 For more information, refer to the TICW projects website at www.childtrafficking.net.

6 ILO-IPEC – TICW draft papers, *Prevent the Children from Dropout is One of the Good Practices to Prevent Trafficking*.

7 For more information, refer to the SCREAM website at http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipec/scream/index.htm.

8 Project counties selected 145 interested young women to do a 5-day training in micro-business development, strategy and execution. For more information, see ILO-IPEC – TICW draft papers, *Individual Search for Jobs by Learning to do Micro-business* (sic).

9 ILO-IPEC – TICW draft papers, *Prevent the Children from Dropout is One of the Good Practices to Prevent Trafficking*.

10 ILO Website, "SCREAM – On the Web": http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipec/scream/on_the_web.htm.

11 ILO Website, "Scream – Education Pack": http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipec/scream/education_pack.htm.

12 Table taken directly from ILO-IPEC document, "Beneficiaries/participants of ILO Spring Bud Programme and Education Component of TICW."

13 Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation Exercise was implemented in Menghai; information on the other three counties is pending final evaluation. Project staff from ILO Yunnan suggested that Menghai is a good median county, and so, on average, the numbers for other counties can be expected to fall within the standard deviation.

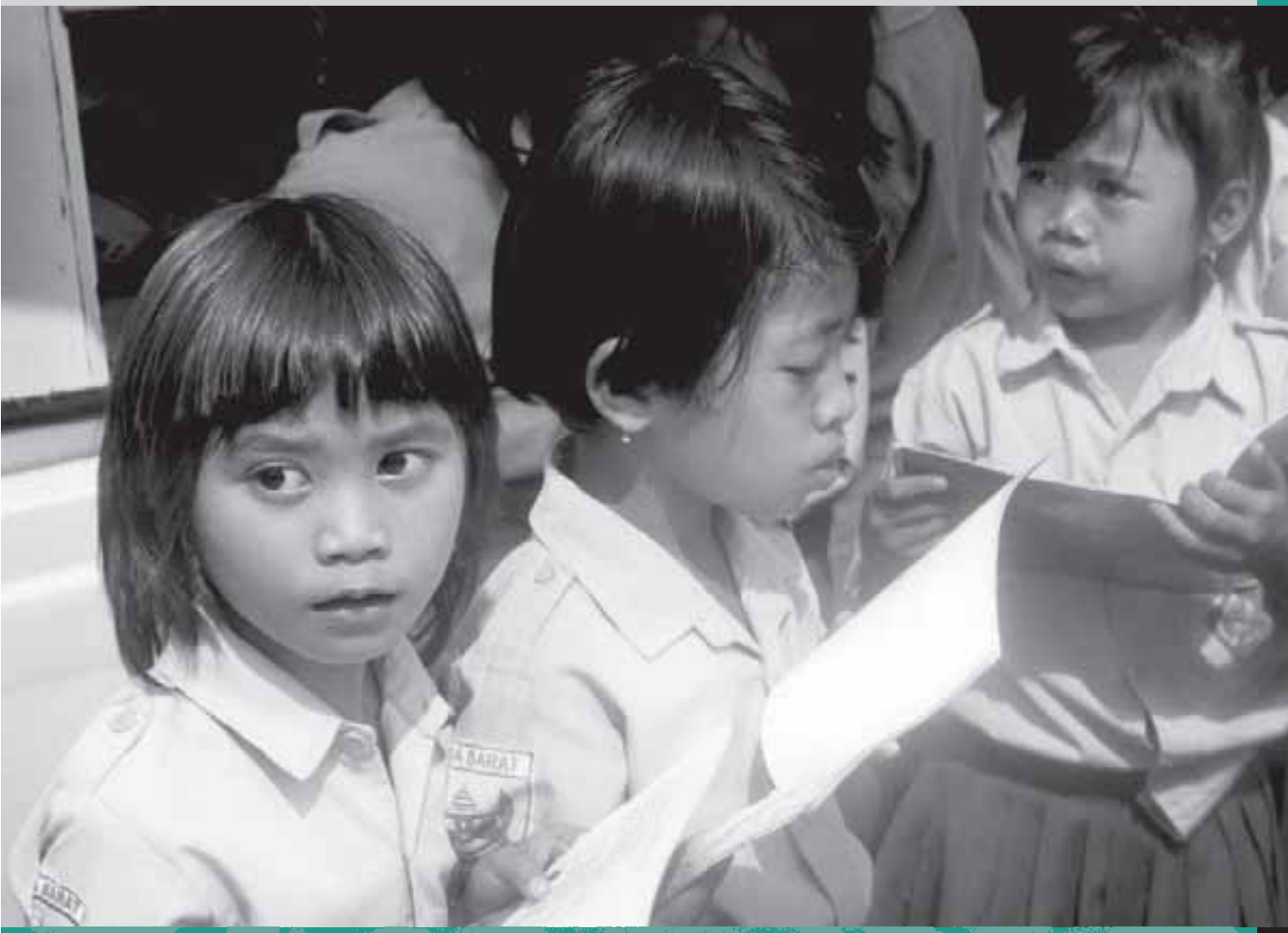
14 For more information, refer to the TICW project website at www.childtraffickng.net, where the PDF of the Participatory Monitoring toolkit is available.

15 ILO-IPEC – TICW draft papers, *Income Generation is an Important Approach to Preventing Rural Children and Women from Trafficking*.

16 ILO-TICW, *Yunnan Education Project Overview*, handout.

17 ILO-IPEC – TICW project papers, *Prevent the Children from Dropout is One of the Good Practices to Prevent Trafficking*.

INDONESIA



Combating child domestic labour through education and training

Contents

1 Context

1.1 Overview

Indonesia lies in the Malay Archipelago and comprises more than 17,000 islands that are home to about 219 million inhabitants.[1] The population can be divided roughly into two groups, the Malayan and the Papuan, with many of the peoples east of Bali representing a transition between the two. Numerous subdivisions occupy each group, and cultural evolution ranges from the modern Javanese and Balinese to traditional tribes in Borneo, Sumatra, and New Guinea. Almost 90 per cent of the population is Muslim, making Indonesia the world's largest Islamic nation. Slightly less than 10 per cent of the population is Christian, about 2 per cent is Hindu and 1 per cent Buddhist.

1.2 Migration and child labour

Two striking characteristics of the population are its urbanization tendency and its unbalanced distribution. Over the past 25 years people have migrated from the rural areas to urban centres, almost doubling the percentage of the population in the cities. Another migratory trend has been the prevalence of Indonesian women working abroad in the Middle East, Malaysia and Singapore. Anecdotal evidence suggests that children, mostly girls from rural towns, are replacing the workforce in Jakarta and in provincial towns and cities. "Because Indonesian domestic workers have found a choice to migrate abroad for higher remuneration, it is getting more difficult to find adult domestic workers who work in Indonesia with limited remuneration," says Ayaka Matsuno, technical officer on migration for the ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. Thus, it is suspected that children are replenishing the workforce.

The ILO defines child domestic labour as situations where children younger than 18 years perform domestic tasks in the home of a third party or 'employer' under exploitative conditions (long working hours, with little or no wages, for example). The worst form of child domestic labour is a situation that is extreme and involves trafficking, slavery or practices akin to slavery. Because child domestic labourers work behind closed doors, it is difficult to know how many children are employed under such conditions. ILO estimates that about 700,000 children younger than 18 years work in Indonesian households. A child domestic worker's salary is from US$14 to US$16 per month[2], about 50 per cent less than the average income of adult domestic workers.

1.3 Birth registration

Another obstacle to regulating children in domestic work is the lack of birth registration, particularly in rural villages where women with no access to hospitals have babies at home. UNICEF estimates that six of 10 Indonesian under-five-year-olds are not registered and that birth registration can cost from US$10 to US$80.[3] This lack of documentation denies children their right to an identity and allows parents to seek fraudulent documents so that children can become migrant workers. "Not all children have birth certificates because it's very expensive," says Kusnaidi, Head of Panyingkiran Village in Karawang District. "So there's data manipulation from the community. On the card, the child has more than 18 years when everyone knows the child is actually below. Parents do this so the child can go to Saudi Arabia and make a lot of money." Kusnaidi uses community radio to remind parents about the laws against forging documents and to promote basic education to all village children, particularly girls.

1.4 Culture

Communicating the harm of child domestic labour to the communities in Indonesia presents a challenge because of historical precedents. In Indonesia the Javanese recognize the *ngenger* tradition, an expression used when a child is taken to relatives or extended family in a bigger city; or to non-relatives who are committed to helping the child. In traditional *ngenger*, children engaged in domestic work in exchange for schooling, room and board. Today the extended family ingredient of *ngenger* has all-but disappeared and has evolved into a practice that seems to benefit the employer more than the child.[4] Today, children are routinely sent to the cities by family, relatives and neighbours to work as domestic labourers. In some cases, the child works for an employer until he or she has paid back the money that was given to the parents as future earnings; in other cases, the child's salary may be sent directly to his or her parents. Sometimes the child and/or parents receive nothing.

Although children are not supposed to work until they are 15 years old, many younger than this are employed as domestic workers. According to the Association of Indonesian Domestic Worker Suppliers, the highest demand from employers is for children 13 to 16 years old because they are cheaper than adult domestic workers, easier to handle and are submissive.[5]

Additionally, historical practices provide an enabling environment for child sex work. Commercial sex work is generally accepted in Indramayu District, for example, because the province was a traditional supplier of *selir*, or concubines for the royal court. There are even reports of a religious leader in Indramayu giving blessings to a child who was about to be trafficked for the sex industry. In light of the cultural context, many children exploited in sex work are not from families that live in extreme poverty.

Because these practices have deep cultural roots, they are accepted as the norm and are not viewed as trafficking or exploitative in nature.[6] Many parents are oblivious to the dangers girl children face when living in someone's household; they may believe it possible for her to combine education and work. This blindness is coupled with widely shared cultural beliefs that hold child domestic labour as a harmless occupation which guarantees poor families a subsidized income. This belief is agitated by poverty, lack of opportunity and socio-economic aspirations that compete with education.

1.5 Early marriage

The tradition of arranged marriage serves varying purposes: the girl is married young (at the onset of puberty), which ensures her virginity on her wedding day; family alliances are established; a bride price is earned; the family burden caused by an additional mouth to feed is reduced; and the girl is added to a new family's workforce.[7] Many Indonesian marriages today are 'love marriages', but they are still encouraged at an early age for some of the same historic reasons that applied to arranged marriages. About 27 per cent of Indonesian women marry by the time they are 18 years old, but in the project district of Indramayu 45 per cent of the marriages involve girls younger than 16 years, the minimum legal age of marriage for girls.[8]

Most West Java parents think it unwise to turn down a first marriage proposal even if their daughter is still a teen because a proposal is believed to come only once. Also, for many a proposal signals that it's time for the daughter to get married, even if the suitor is a stranger or the daughter objects. Poverty is also a determinant, as 35 per cent of Indonesia's early marriages involve girls from the poorest 20 per cent of the population, compared to the 8 per cent of early marriages that take place among girls from the richest 20 per cent. Early marriage perpetuates the vicious cycle of poverty, as 2 per cent of married girls have no education; and 51 per cent only have primary schooling.[9] Because children lack the maturity it takes to sustain a marriage, many of these unions end in divorce as soon as one month later. Girls are then left to fend for themselves, and they often voluntarily enter or are trafficked into commercial sexual exploitation.

1.6 Gender

Girls are more vulnerable to trafficking and early marriage, and are denied access to school more often than boys because of historic gender biases in the community and home. Girls are saddled with the expectation that they should contribute to the family income and provide support and assistance in their role as daughters. This vulnerability is exacerbated by their 'relatively unequal' (secondary) status in the family and society.[10] Domestic work is often seen as 'women's work' and thus the only suitable employment option for girls. Gender inequality also comes into play when looking at the exclusion of child domestic labour as a priority sector in the first phase of the National Plan of Action on Worst Forms of Child Labor (NPA-WFCL). The fact that child domestic work, which is mostly performed by girl children, is not prioritized represents the general notion of 'under-valued' domestic work, and the invisibility and acceptability of such work performed mostly by girls (93 per cent).[11]

1.7 Poverty

Girls who are pushed into domestic labour are typically living in poverty. The *State of the World's Children 2005* proposes the following working definition of children in poverty: Children living in poverty experience deprivation of the material, spiritual and emotional resources needed to survive, develop and thrive, leaving them unable to enjoy their rights, achieve their full potential or participate as full and equal members of society.[12] Poverty is almost always a context for the early entry of children into regular work and into child labour, although this poverty may not only relate to the poor financial standing of the family. Poverty is not always an absolute state but can relate more generally to a situation in which the family income is not sufficient to meet outgoings and where alternative means of meeting these outgoings must be found.[13]

Although poverty is evident to the eye, its complex nature makes it hard to establish an accurate universal definition. Indonesia's GDP, at US$1,151 per head, is less than that of neighbouring Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore. This still paints an unclear picture, as the poorest 20 per cent share in only 8.4 per cent of the wealth. One non-income assessment is the Human Development Index (HDI), which measures deprivation based on three basic dimensions: a long and healthy life, knowledge, and a decent standard of living. Indonesia has an HDI rank of 110 and a converse Human Poverty Index of 41. Its rank puts it in the category of medium development, although great disparities exist across the board.

West Java's most recent HDI was 64.6, which falls in the low-medium human development category.[14] Accordingly, people from West Java have a similar quality of life as people in Colombia, Mauritius or Suriname.[15,16] West Java's HDI indicates that social spending per capita is low and many children have no access to basic education, primary health care and/or safe water. Those who cannot afford to meet their basic needs either depend on aid from local and international organizations, or simply go without. This is evident in the school attendance rates of poor children compared to the wealthy. While the national enrolment rate is at 94 per cent, the poorest 20 per cent of the population has a much lower national enrolment rate of 49.9 per cent, compared to 72.2 per cent of the richest 20 per cent.[17]

A 2004 study by the Ministry of Education found that parents were paying from 53.7 per cent to 73.9 per cent – an estimated 17 per cent of all household spending – of the cost of their children's education.[18] Some of the poorest children qualify for scholarships but cannot use the assistance if they live too far from school and are without bicycles or other transportation. Since there is a strong correlation between financial barriers to education and child labour, national strategies should focus on increasing access to education for Indonesia's poorest children and for those living in rural areas, keeping in mind that the two groups are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

1.8 National economy and education

A good first step to increasing overall enrolment and retention was the ratification of Indonesia's Education Act No. 20, in which the President declared nine-year compulsory education.[19] Government spending however lags behind this vital education policy and has thus weakened its impact. In 2005 the state budget allocated just US$2.4 billion to education, whereas the estimated cost is expected to be about US$7.6 billion.[20] The education budget began to shrink during the 1997–1998 Asian financial crisis. During this period, public spending on education plummeted by 12 per cent and by a massive 30 per cent two years later. Neighbouring Thailand held its education spending at pre-crisis levels; Malaysia managed to increase its education budget; and households in the Republic of Korea (ROK) were able to spend more to compensate for government cuts. But in Indonesia, poor families could no longer afford to pay fees and pulled their children out of school or postponed entry.[21] In an attempt to stay afloat, Indonesia received a US$43 billion bail-out package from the International Monetary Fund, and now spends three times more on debt repayments than on health and education.[22]

UNICEF recognizes poverty as one of the main barriers to providing education for all in developing countries. The government of Indonesia made commitments to education at the 2000 World Education Forum, along with 164 governments. "The optimal conditions for meeting the 2015 targets are accelerated and more equitable economic growth, and improved access to better-quality basic services," said then Director of UNICEF, Carol Bellamy. Indonesia has made progress since then, but lags behind because of scarce resources that could be better invested in education. Poverty in developing countries hinders the education of children living in those countries, especially for girls.[23]

Indonesia is the only major country from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to yet fully recover from the Asian financial crisis and has not increased its education budget to pre-crisis amounts. According to UNESCO figures, the government spent only 9 per cent of the national budget on education in 2005. This amount is extremely low in comparison to neighbouring Thailand, at 27 per cent; Malaysia, at 20 per cent and the Philippines, at 17 per cent. In response to this, Indonesian teacher's association *Persatuan Guru Republik Indonesia* (PGRI) filed a law suit in Constitutional Court alleging that the government violated the 1945 constitution by spending less than 20 per cent of its annual budget on education. Although the Court sided with PRGI, the government has only increased the education budget to 10 per cent.[24] In order to achieve the figure of 20 per cent, the government has committed to increase its educational budget gradually.[25]

When Indonesia is not facing a monetary crisis, it's battling those of a political nature – which often have economic ramifications. The government has been embroiled in decades-long regional conflicts with provinces struggling for statehood such as Aceh, Papua and Timor-Leste (formerly East Timor), which eventually won its independence. Last year the outlook of the Aceh conflict turned positive as the government and representatives of the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) signed a Memorandum of Understanding that could signal peace after 30 years of strife. But in Papua, special autonomy granted in 2001 remains largely unimplemented. Insecurity and terrorism have become factors costing the nation billions in tourism revenue and foreign investment. According the Economist, earnings from tourism in 2000 dropped to US$4.8 billion from a peak of US$5.3 billion in 1997. After the September 11 World Trade Center attacks, Indonesia endured cancelled flights, empty hotel rooms and a drop in visa applications. By mid-2002 the industry temporarily rebounded, but then dropped again after the October attacks on a popular tourist destination in Bali.

Another factor that influences Indonesia's economy is geography. The nation lies along the 'Ring of Fire', an arc of volcanoes and fault lines encircling the Pacific Basin, and is prone to frequent earthquakes. The most notable was the 26 December 2004 quake, which measured 9.1 on the Richter scale, triggering a tsunami that killed an estimated 130,000 Indonesians; 37,000 remain missing. Entire villages were washed away and about 504,518 were displaced. Reconstruction costs for the tsunami are estimated from US$4 billion to US$5 billion. To cover the cost of reconstruction and accommodate rising oil prices, the government raised fuel prices and increased spending on poverty-relief programmes in 2005.[26]

If the present economic trends persist Indonesia could miss the MDG education target of universal primary education for all children by 2015 with no disparities between boys and girls. Even if families are not income-poor, poverty still has its implications; a lack of job opportunities makes schooling unattractive and seemingly unnecessary. In 2002 unemployment among those who completed secondary education was 16.8 per cent, compared with 3.9 per cent for those who completed only primary education or less.[27] Though parents lack hard data, they know from anecdotal evidence that good jobs are hard to come by, and are particularly scarce for rural girls.

1.9 Enabling environment

Indonesia has ratified ILO Convention No. 138 concerning the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment by Law No. 20/1999 and ILO Convention No. 182 concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor by Law No.1/2000.[28] The UN Convention on the Rights of Child has also been ratified by Presidential Decree No. 36/1990. In response to the ratification of such conventions, particularly to the ILO C182, the National Plan of Action on the Worst Forms of Child Labor was established by the Presidential Decree 5912002. This Presidential Decree identified 13 areas of work, which could be regarded as worst forms of child labour. And child domestic work was recognized as one of them. It is also important to review laws related to child trafficking considering the relationship to child domestic labour. The Bill of Anti Trafficking in Persons is now under the deliberation by Parliament. The Indonesian Government has also endorsed the National Plan of Action on the Elimination of Trafficking in Women and Children (Presidential Decree No. 88, 2002) and the National Plan of Action on the Elimination of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (Presidential Decree No. 87, 2002). At the end of 2005, the Indramayu District enacted a perda (local regulation) on Prevention and Prohibition of Trafficking for Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Indramayu District (Local Regulation No. 14 Year 2005).

However, up to now, there is still no labour legislation concerning the employment of domestic workers, let alone child domestic workers. The Ministry of Manpower is now discussing the Bill of Protection of Domestic Workers. The initial draft prepared by the Ministry has been discussed in some public forums and the project has provided some support towards the development of this Bill. The Bill will also address child domestic workers.

The newly enacted law of Manpower Act 13/2003 provides a strong ground for the Ministry of Manpower and Training (Mo/M&T) to act upon. The Manpower Act includes a section on child protection, and prohibits the employment and involvement of children in the worst forms of child labour, based on the definition contained in ILO Convention No 182. It states that there will be further implementing regulations on the types of work which are considered harmful for the safety, health or moral development of the child younger than 18 years. Together with the NPA-WFCL, this act can provide legal ground for protecting children domestic labourers working in hazardous and/or exploitative conditions.

The Manpower Act also provides specific protection for children between the ages of 13 and 15 years, who can be employed only for light work according to the following requirements. The "light" work should not stunt or disrupt children's physical, mental and social development in any way. Having no stated protections, child domestic workers can immediately benefit from the enforcement of the Manpower Act. Recognizing the magnitude of the problem and the new tool to tackle the issue in hand, Mo/M&T is committed to work through the proposed programme to protect child domestic workers.

Another legal instrument that would protect child domestic labourers from abusive situations is the Indonesian Law on Child Protection. This law provide a more severe penalty to those abusing children, regardless of whether the children are working or in any other situation. Compared to the Manpower Act, this has already been implemented and enforced in some cases. The focal point of this child protection issue is the State Ministry of Women Empowerment.

Since January 2001, the new law on regional autonomy enhanced the independence and self-initiation of the provincial and district-level governments. Thus, local governments have become increasingly powerful and important players in decision and policy making at the subnational level. Several initiatives have already been proposed at the subnational level to protect the rights of domestic workers as well as child domestic workers. For example, in Yogyakarta, some NGOs have prepared a draft Provincial Regulation on domestic workers. In Jakarta, initiatives have been made to amend the existing Provincial Regulation (perda) No. 6, 1993 concerning recruitment agencies of domestic workers. While the existing perda mainly aims at controlling the recruitment agencies for local revenue purposes and does not provide protection for the rights of domestic workers, or child domestic workers, the amendment is being discussed from the point of view of human rights' protection. The first phase of the following programme supported this initiative.

2 Description of projects

2.1 Overview

The Regional Project to Combat Trafficking in Children for Labor and Sexual Exploitation – implemented in the Indramayu District – is the Indonesian component of the Trafficking in Children in South and South-East Asia (TICSA II), which used education as a strategy to prevent child domestic labour. Congruent to the TICSA II project, Phase II of the subregional ILO/Netherlands' Technical cooperation – Resource allocation mechanism (TC-RAM) Partnership Programme also took effect, known as the project on Preventing and Eliminating Exploitative Child Domestic Work through Education and Training in South-east and East Asia. This project focussed on policy advocacy and creating an enabling environment in many countries, with the Bekasi and Karawang districts in Indonesia being two example of good practice.

The Indonesian Child Welfare Foundation (YKAI), a child rights and protection organization established in 1979, implemented the two projects with the technical and financial assistance of the ILO and the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (ILO-IPEC). The organization drew upon its experiences and models of rehabilitation for victims of child trafficking, which were developed during the respective first phase of TICSA. According to the project design, Phase II aimed to retain children who had participated in withdrawal, NFE and catch-up education during the first phase, and bring in new child participants for the second. Children who had participated in the first phase benefited for three years while those who joined later received support for one year only. While the ILO-IPEC portion of the programme lasted two years – from 2004 to 2006 – YKAI has since extended the project with limited outputs and a downsized staff.

2.2 Preventing and Eliminating Exploitative Child Domestic Work through Education and Training – Karawang and Bekasi

This project focused on promoting a change in policy and creating an enabling environment to contribute to the progressive elimination of exploitation of child domestic labourers. Child labour is a major obstacle to the goal of education for all since a child who is employed full time cannot attend school. The educational achievement of those who dare combine work and school suffers, and there is a strong tendency for child domestics to drop out due to fatigue and inability to keep up with their studies.[29] The project aimed to increase the awareness of the public on these matters, as well as to withdraw child domestic workers younger than 15 years and provide counselling, access to NFE and vocational training service to child domestic workers from 15 to 18 years old.

The general situation of women and children in Karawang is one of poverty, and low literacy and education levels. The district's 2001 HDI was 60.9; however, if you were to adjust the HDI based on inequalities in the achievements of girls and women, the adjusted HDI, or Gender-related Development Index (GDI), would be a mere 0.46,[30] which indicates girls have similar living conditions to people in Nigeria, Haiti, and Madagascar.[31] This lower quality of life and access to basic social services such as education can be linked to long-standing gender bias in the community: girl children are seen as 'the wealth of the family' and are expected to boost household income even at the expense of their education. As a result, girls are more likely to drop out of school, either to marry, work as a domestic, or become exploited in sex work. In 2004 an estimated 400 cases of child trafficking were recorded in the district. Some 340 of those cases involved the trafficking of children to the Middle East, mostly to Saudi Arabia, to become child domestic workers.[32] Low education is a major reason that Karawang children are trafficked, as only 58 per cent of junior high school-aged children are enrolled in school; and 14 per cent of these drop out.

2.2.1 Objectives

Stated objectives for the Preventing and Eliminating Exploitative Child Domestic Work through Education and Training project in Karawang and Bekasi include:

- Karawang district will make clear political commitments in regards to child domestic workers by creating policies and/or local regulations.
- Civil societies and governmental institutions will have increased knowledge on the situation of child domestic workers and improved capacity to progressively eliminate instances of children working as domestic workers.
- Children younger than 15 years are withdrawn from child domestic work and provided sustainable alternatives (Bekasi); and children 15 to 18 years old will have gained skills to generate income for self-determination and prevention of exploitation.
- Children in the Karawang District will not be trafficked for any purposes, including domestic work.

2.2.2 Centres of activities and innovative literacy strategies

Vis-à-vis the project objectives of child-trafficking prevention and providing basic skills and knowledge to children living at home and child domestics, YKAI opened two centres of activities: Sanggar As Syifa in Karawang and Sanggar Puri in Bekasi. The latter closed in June 2006 but served the same function as Sanggar As Syifa where children received catch-up education and NFE (Bekasi only), tutoring, vocational training, computer and English classes, and the opportunities to play sports and learn hobbies. This built their self-esteem and opened their minds to new possibilities, says Samsul, a social worker for Sanggar As Syifa, "Coming here gives them new values. They learn about their rights and if they have a problem they tell me."

Parallel to educational access, the project aimed to increase the quality of children's education. Most rural West Java children don't have books at home and attend schools that don't have libraries or computers. YKAI, through the support of Bank Niaga, set up a mobile library made up of four trucks, each outfitted with shelves to hold its share of the 4,000 contributed books. The mobile library visited 25 primary schools in Karawang twice weekly. "The mobile library is very important because it's good for children to read books that they are interested in," says Yani, a social worker for the mobile library. "A lot of children don't read well and they don't have many chances to practise outside of school."

One stop on the mobile library's itinerary was Sekolah Darsar, a Karawang primary school with no library and six rooms – some with gaping holes in the walls. Aladdin Argawidzaya, English teacher for Sekolah Darsar says the mobile library not only allowed for leisure reading, but also improved learning in school-required subjects. "Children in the village only begin to learn English in the third and fourth grades, whereas their counterparts in Jakarta begin English in the first and second grades," he says. "The children are very interested to read English books and I am still holding out hope that one day our school will have a library."

2.2.3 Project beneficiaries

In the project district of Bekasi, activities focused on protecting and supporting existing child domestic workers, and withdrawing child domestic workers younger than 15 years, the legal age for employment. All 50 child domestic labourers targeted for withdrawal were successfully returned to their villages. Project staff attributes this success to working closely with the community. "When we started the programme, we were worried about how we could do something like this – because in our culture child domestic workers are the solution, and we see it as the problem," says Tata Sudrajat, former Head of Research and Development for YKAI. "[Therefore], we had to work on changing the beliefs of the community."

Child domestic workers who were not targeted for withdrawal were empowered through NFE and vocational training, such as handicraft, sewing, and *monte* (beading) courses. Social workers visited employers to promote a weekly day of rest, NFE, and to get permission for the child to visit the centre for structured activities and socialization.

While parents and children were the main target participants, the project recognized that sustainable change requires an enabling environment. As such, it aimed for the participation of civil society and government institutions in the prevention and elimination of exploitation of child domestic labourers. The local government of Karawang proved a valuable partner for such social mobilization and agreed to draft a perda on local anti-trafficking regulation with specific references to child domestic labour. To sensitize and engage the community in the process, YKAI established a viable communication channel: community radio. Radio was identified as the best medium since many people in the community cannot read and don't have television. Now one year old, Radio Pelangi has a coverage of around, a 10-kilometre radius and plans to expand to a 40-kilometre radius.

2.2.4 Funding

The Preventing Eliminating Exploitative Child Domestic Work through Education and Training project officially ran from November 2004 to January 2006 with the support of ILO-IPEC. The Government of the Netherlands gave US$65,032 and the national contribution totalled US$21,739. Since the end of the project, YKAI has continued some project activities with financial assistance from the local Department of Education Bank Niaga, Indofood Fritolay Makmur, Teh Botol and the International Garment Training Centre (IGTC). Other activities have continued with community support.

2.3 Regional Project to Combat Trafficking in Children for Labor and Sexual Exploitation – Indramayu

The Regional Project to Combat Trafficking in Children for Labor and Sexual Exploitation used education as a direct intervention strategy to prevent children from entering domestic employment. Based on a 2001 provincial HDI assessment, Indramayu has one of the lowest female literacy and girl school attendance rates in the province. Lack of education, low literacy levels and few marketable skills makes it difficult for young people to find suitable employment and puts them at risk of trafficking. "With education girls have an opportunity to choose what's right and what's wrong," says H. Arifin, supervisor of education for Cikedung, a subdistrict of Indramayu. "She has options."

Education is pivotal to eliminating and preventing child labour and sexual exploitation, establishing a skilled workforce and promoting development based on the principles of social justice and human rights. Indonesia's efforts to achieve Education for All and the progressive elimination of child labour are therefore inextricably linked. Children with little or no access to quality education have limited options and prematurely enter the labour market where they face dangerous and exploitative work conditions. Activities sought to mobilize local support for the prevention of child trafficking for sexual exploitation and focussed on improving school curricula and children's access to education, as well as awareness raising.

2.3.1 Objectives

The stated objectives for the Regional Project to Combat Trafficking in Children for Labor and Sexual Exploitation in Indramayu include:

- To improve the overall quality of education (grades 1-9) to increase the overall retention rate of girls and boys in schools in two subdistricts (Cikedung and Gabus Wetan).
- To provide need-based vocational training to facilitate wage-employment.
- To change the knowledge, attitudes and beliefs of parents and the community as a whole toward child trafficking.
- To support continued basic education of girls after completion of grade 6.

Vignette 1: Not this daughter

Elinah's parents are too poor to pay for her schooling. Both Elinah's father and mother only completed the third grade, and now they make a scant living working the rice paddies. Their work requires long hours of bending in the heat of the day – planting seedlings by hand, cutting and bundling rice stalks and separating the rice grains from the husks. Like many Amis village children, Elinah, 14, joins her parents to plant and cultivate rice. But the difference between her and the other children is that she leaves at midday to participate in NFE offered at Sanggar Teratai, located in her village.

"I like open school because I can help my parents and still have an education," Elinah says. Aside from academic knowledge, Elinah says that she knows more about child rights and determination. "I know it's against the rights of a child to have to work and not be able to attend school at such a young age," she says. "I pity the children who cannot go to school."

Elinah's father, Darsiman, is less worried about child rights and more concerned about what happens to his daughter. "Life treats educated girls differently from uneducated girls," Darsiman says. And Darsiman should know: Cradling his youngest daughter, 21 months old Siti, he tells a sad story about another one of his girls. A year earlier, he says that he allowed his oldest daughter Karimah, 15 years, to falsify papers in order to work as a child domestic. In transit to her destination, Karimah discovered that she was being trafficked for prostitution.

Though statistics are not concrete many stories have been told of girls who are recruited for domestic work, but instead are forced into the commercial sex industry in transit. These girls are unaware that they have been tricked until they reach the brothel, or a holding area such as the one Karimah found herself in. Traffickers threaten the girls and tell them that if they go to the authorities they will be punished because of their false documents.

Fortunately for Darsiman and his daughter, Karimah ran away from her captors and found a nearby shelter for child domestic workers on Batam Island. Her father borrowed US$50 from a neighbour to bring her back home. She is now working as a legal child domestic worker in Saudi Arabia, but her parents haven't heard from her in three months.

After he finishes his story, Darsiman hugs his youngest daughter tighter and nods that his oldest daughter's experience influenced his decision to make sure that Elinah gets an education. When he found out about NFE offered at the centre, he was adamant that she participate. "We realize that her education is more important than any money she could give us."

2.3.2 Centre of activities

The impetus for education was established with the opening of Sanggar Teratai (centre of activities) in Amis village and Sanggar Kancil in Babakan Jaya village. The latter closed in May 2006 but offered the same services as Sanggar Teratai, where at-risk children participated in recreation and sport, received counselling, and attended NFE and catch-up education classes. In total, 343 girls younger than 16 participated in a three-month catch-up education programme. Once girls completed the classes, they were offered scholarships to continue studying at the local junior high school. If formal school was not feasible, children were able to attend non-formal junior high school at the centre of activities. The District Office of Education supported YKAI's educational interventions by ensuring that the classes are aligned with the standards set by the Ministry of Education, and providing scholarships and other types of assistance.

Teachers were engaged to combat drop-out and child trafficking through participation in teacher training, which covered child trafficking and efforts to combat it; how to handle children at risk of dropping out and those who have dropped out; contextual learning as an alternative learning method; school-based management; and social relations between teachers and students. YKAI and the District Office of Education agree that the training made a difference in how teachers related to students. "Before the training, teachers never visited parents of children who stopped attending classes," said H. Arifin, supervisor of education for Cikedung. "Now they do."

2.3.3 Vocational training

Even with the push for increased enrolment and retention rates, particularly for girls, project and education officials conceded that girls who managed to finish primary school were still left with few options for gainful employment. As such, 100 students participated in vocational training offered by YKAI through the IGTC in greater Jakarta. Courses included machine operation, middle management and merchandising. But most students from Indramayu studied machine operation because the other courses required a working knowledge of English and higher levels of education, says Till Freyer, chairman and founder of IGTC. "We must keep in mind that girls in Indramayu have no chance to obtain a job without training because their education standard is low, their motivation and discipline is low, and the temptation to work as a sex worker is high," he says. "Sex work is the only alternative these girls have because there is not even domestic work in Indramayu, so training gives them a real chance to become respected citizens of Indonesia."

2.3.4 Funding

The Regional Project to Combat Trafficking in Children for Labor and Sexual Exploitation officially ran from March 2004 to February 2006. The ILO-IPEC contribution totalled US$70,205, with support from the US DOL; the local contribution totalled US$17,982. YKAI has continued some project activities with financial assistance from the District Office of Education, Bank Niaga, IGTC, Indofood, Fritolay Makmur and Teh Botol.

3 Process

3.1 Dual strategy

YKAI's programme positioned itself in the broader picture of the NPA-WFCL, and supported the Indonesia National Plan of Action and the development of the Time Bound Programme for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor (TBP). Following the strategy employed by the TBP, the programme took on a dual strategy: 1) to develop a direct intervention programme to prevent children from entering domestic employment through the Regional Project to Combat Trafficking in Children for Labor and Sexual Exploitation, and 2) a focus on promoting a change in policy and an enabling environment to contribute to the progressive elimination of exploitation of child domestic labourers through the Preventing and Eliminating Exploitative Child Domestic Work through Education and Training project.

3.2 Overview for Preventing and Eliminating Exploitative Child Domestic Work through Education and Training

Though under the same initiative, the activities in Karawang and Bekasi districts differed in strategy. In Karawang, project activities promoted anti-trafficking through creating an enabling environment through policy advocacy, community mobilization, and prevention. In Bekasi, project staff worked directly with child domestic labourers through NFE and vocational training to empower them with skills to generate income for self-determination and prevention of exploitation.

3.3 Withdrawal programme – Bekasi

This activity took place in Bekasi District and involved removing 50 children younger than the legal working age of 15 years, returning them to their villages, and enrolling them in the formal school system with scholarship assistance. The withdrawal component, though successful, proved difficult because many parents wanted their children to work and said they couldn't afford to finance their child's education past the one year of tuition assistance funded by ILO-IPEC. Many employers were angry when social workers first visited and demanded that YKAI find replacement workers before they released the child, says Aam, a social worker for Sanggar Puri. "The first time I knocked on an employee's door I was afraid, very nervous," she says. "After a while, I became more comfortable because the community was more aware of the centre and its reputation."

Project staff went door-to-door to introduce the centre and get permission for the child to attend recreational and educational activities. In the beginning, many employers slammed doors and refused permission. YKAI mobilized the community in support of the centre by attending weekly women's meetings and worship services to educate employers on the benefits of the centre. Reluctant employers first observed the workers of other neighbourhood child domestic labourers who attended, and eventually allowed their child worker to attend.

3.3.1 Process outline

The centre offered a place for child domestic labourers to socialize, receive NFE and vocational training, and learn about child and labour rights through children's groups led by children. Child domestics younger than 15 years who attended the centre were targeted for withdrawal, and then accompanied to and reintegrated into their homes and communities. This permitted the child to settle in, and allowed social workers to form partnerships with parents, village schools and focal points in the community, which contributed to the objective of mainstreaming withdrawn children into the formal and non-formal education systems.

- Identified 50 children under the age of 15 years working as domestic workers. This was done through a mapping exercise and informal identification methods such as observation, walking door-to-door, and word-of-mouth.
- Employers were approached to obtain permission for the child to attend school (formal and non-formal). During the same period, project staff assessed the feasibility of sending children younger than 15 years back home and enrolling them in school. This included building rapport with employers, sending social workers to the children's homes to discuss the option of returning the child home, and establishing ties with the village schools to establish a monitoring and support system.
- Withdrew 50 underage child domestic workers and returned them to their home villages.
- Provided registration fees for the 50 children at US$10 per child, and linked children to existing scholarship programme.
- Documented the withdrawal cases and the success of the activity to monitor whether the objective of mainstreaming withdrawn children into non-formal or formal education was met.

3.3.2 Partnerships

Project staff partnered with the community to find acceptable ways to ensure child domestic labourers enjoyed child rights. Support was first sought at the *rukunwarga*, or community association level, then at the *rukuntetangg*, or sub-community association level. Since the woman of the house typically takes charge of domestic labourers, social workers spoke at weekly women's meetings to educate and motivate employers to allow children to go to the centre. Project staff also spoke at weekly worship services held at the mosque. The private sector contributed to the programme, allowing it to operate once ILO-IPEC funds expired.

3.4 Anti-trafficking law – Karawang

YKAI worked with the local government to draft an anti-trafficking perda in Karawang. Drafting an anti-trafficking law fed into the larger objective of creating an enabling environment to contribute to the progressive elimination of exploitation of child domestic labourers. YKAI used research as a tool to validate the need for a local anti-trafficking law. Karawang officials only realized the prevalence of child trafficking once YKAI represented the findings from the situation analysis, says Andri Utami, former project coordinator for YKAI. "They [the government] had poor data and didn't have appropriate response mechanisms to the problem," she says. "But they all agreed that trafficking is a long-standing issue and that urgent action is needed to combat it."

After six months of public meetings and consultations, the local government announced its commitment to issuing the regulation. As the district development agency, Badan Perencana Pembangunan Daerah (BAPPEDA) – along with the Board of Community and Social Empowerment (BPMS) – became the focal point for issuing the anti-trafficking law. A drafting team was established and consisted of 11 members from BAPPEDA, BPMS, the District Office of Manpower, the District Office of Social Welfare, the District Legal Office, the University of Karawang, YKAI and JARAK (the NGO's Network for the Elimination of Child Labour in Indonesia).

The resulting perda underscores "domestic work" as a common purpose for trafficking children and women, and affirmed the intention of the Karawang district government to establish a "trafficking in children and women-free zone."[33] The legislation stresses the importance of education and reminds local governments of their obligation "to ensure that each child can join the nine years of compulsory schooling."[34] In an attempt to curb illegal and unsafe migration, the perda requires a woman who plans to work outside of her village or subdistrict to present a letter of recommendation to work from the receiving village or subdistrict.[35] The draft also identifies community participation as a necessary condition in the perda's implementation, in terms of preventing and eliminating trafficking in children and women, and rehabilitating victims of trafficking.[36] Lastly, the team formed a committee to monitor and evaluate the perda's implementation. As a measure of implementation, citizens are urged to report trafficking cases to the committee.

Although the perda does provide a legal framework for trafficking prevention, the gap between the law and enforcement is great. Nevertheless, having the perda gives NGOs and other agencies a means to hold the government accountable, says Ayaka Matsuno, a technical officer on migration for ILO Bangkok. "When the social workers talk to the village chief, police or community people it's always good to refer to the law, whether it is enforced well or not. It gives them power and their arguments become convincing," she says.

3.4.1 Process outline

Trafficking for the purposes of child domestic labour was brought to the forefront, in addition to the typical association between trafficking and sexual exploitation. This educated the community on the harm of the traditional practice of sending children away to work in someone else's household. Broad consultations with the community, government, NGOs and other stakeholders ensured that the perda reflected the needs and wants of the community and enjoyed their full support. Community participation didn't stop with the drafting of the perda; people were encouraged to inform the committee of suspected cases of trafficking. Thus, ownership of the initiative didn't die down once the excitement of drafting the law wore off; communities were advised that the perda needed their continued support. By creating an anti-trafficking policy, the government has committed itself and its stakeholders to preventing trafficking and supporting compulsory education laws on a local level. It has set an example that other districts can follow.

- Conducted situation analysis to obtain the scope of child trafficking in Panyingkiran Village (Karawang) and surrounding areas. Research was used to inform community mobilization and advocacy efforts.
- Educated and mobilized community in support of preventing trafficking of children for purposes of domestic labour and sexual exploitation via community radio, which was established in March 2005.
- Workshop conducted (1 June 2005) to garner support and increase knowledge on the drafting of a perda on child trafficking. Workshops were attended by the Minister of Women's Empowerment, the Head of District (Karawang), BAPPEDA, local government apparatus and NGOs.
- Follow up action recommended by BAPPEDA to set up a Task Force (ad-hoc committee) to prepare the perda.
- Held meetings to discuss the scope of the perda, i.e. whether it should cover trafficking in general or focus on children and women only.
- Through wide consultations, the drafting team decided that the perda will focus on trafficking in children and women only.
- Drafted perda in December 2005. Implementation will depend upon the new local leadership.

3.4.2 Partnerships

The Ministry of Women's Empowerment was already committed to combating child domestic labour, and had already developed a national policy on child domestic labourers. Thus, this particular ministry proved a valuable partner in supporting the drafting of the perda at the district level. The initiative was taken to the community via Radio Pelangi, which served as a major communication channel to mobilize the community behind the anti-trafficking law. YKAI also partnered with other NGOs, local government officials and the community to initiate and consult on the drafting of the perda.

3.5 Radio Pelangi – Karawang

Radio Pelangi was launched 1 June 2005 by the Minister of Women's Empowerment and Karawang's Head of District. ILO-IPEC financed the initial set-up, but the station has become self-sufficient from the sale of *attensi*, or request sheets for special songs or messages to people in the village. Radio manager Aseop said the station receives anywhere from 100 to 150 request sheets per day, and broadcasters received about 50 SMS requests daily. Villagers can buy yellow request sheets from street vendors and small shops in the village for RPS 400 (US$0.04); an urgent message cost RPS 500 (US$0.05).

The radio station is wildly popular and promotes messages on education, health, and child-trafficking prevention. Programming runs daily from 5:00 a.m. to midnight and includes music, local news, community development, and messages on child trafficking and other social issues. Kusnaidi, Head of Panyingkiran Village, whose radio personality name is 'Kool', has a slot on the air that focuses on 'community guidance'. "I feel there is a definite change in the attitude of the community," Kool said. "I hope that the community will continue its interest in Radio Pelangi and that the collaboration can be increased, programmes improved and coverage area expanded."

3.5.1 Process outline

Radio Pelangi established an effective communication channel for anti-trafficking messages because many villagers lack television at home and do not read. This eliminated information overload and competing messages, and established Radio Pelangi as the main information source for the village. A sense of community ownership was created via several factors: volunteer broadcasters represent various segments of community; the radio station was located in the community centre, and thus easily accessible by all; and attention sheets allowed the community members to request songs, thus giving them a say in one area of programming.

- YKAI sought the support of the local government in establishing community a radio station.
- A Radio Organization was formed comprising 23 local volunteers, of which there was an equal number of males and females, and13 were younger than 18 years old. The Radio Organization took charge of establishing Radio Pelangi and secured a room in the village community centre from the local government at no cost.
- The local operating license was then granted by the Ministry of Communication.
- Focus-group discussions were conducted to develop messages on child trafficking, identify interactive and needs-based entertainment, and decide on forms of community drama. Involving the community on message development increased the likelihood that exposure to the messages would lead to positive changes in the knowledge and behaviour on child domestic labour.
- Community radio material was produced, such as dramas, radio spots and the like.
- 27 participants received two trainings: the first session on 1 June 2005 presented general information on radio community (definition, principle, coverage, vision and mission) and child-trafficking issues. For the second session on 11-12 June, YKAI collaborated with Radio Sturada, a private radio station in Karawang, to educate trainees on broadcast technique, journalistic skills, programming for community radio and technical guidelines for production.

3.5.2 Partnerships

YKAI successfully involved the community, local government, and private sector to establish and sustain Radio Pelangi. It was smart to give the Radio Organization the responsibility of finding space for the station, as it assigned community members the responsibility for the initial success of the radio station. Designating the Head of Village as broadcaster for 'community guidance' was strategic, as the Head of Village is also an educator and can speak from a place of authority when addressing issues of education and child trafficking. Costs associated with the establishment of the radio station were divided: ILO-IPEC paid for the initial set up; and Teh Botol (a private-sector entity in Indonesia) sponsored the printing of 10,000 request cards and three door prizes. Now, money generated from the request sheets pays for operational expenses such as electricity, snacks for broadcasters, equipment, VCDs and cassettes, etc.

This constant interaction between the community and the radio station creates a sense of ownership and provides a forum for dialogue, says Kusnaidi, a broadcaster and Head of Panyingkiran Village in Karawang District. "I talk about trafficking, the importance of education and about nine-year compulsory education," he says. "I feel there is a change in the community: the number of children being sent to do child domestic work is going down, the age of those working has gone up and the number of drop-outs has decreased."

3.6 Overview for Regional Project to Combat Trafficking in Children for Labor and Sexual Exploitation

Since Indramayu is a major child-trafficking sending area, interventions aimed to prevent children from involvement in domestic employment through the provision of catch-up education and NFE, and vocational training. The community was also targeted for education in hopes that a change in knowledge, attitude, and practices would create an enabling environment for parents of girl children in particular. Like Karawang, Indramayu District has a community radio station as part of the Regional Project on Combating Child Trafficking for Labor and Sexual Exploitation. However, the station has not been as successful in Indramayu because it shares the airwaves with commercial radio stations. Also, the radio venture was not fully supported by village officials, who worried it would interfere with existing television and radio programming. Nevertheless, the project has mobilized the community using other methods, including interpersonal communication and teacher training.

3.7 Teacher training – Indramayu

Teachers can be the first line of defence in preventing drop-out, but sometimes lack the know-how to take on this important role. YKAI partnered with the District Office of Education, local media, NGOs, teachers and education professionals to develop a training module to increase child-trafficking knowledge among teachers. The training objective was to improve the quality of education, thereby making formal schooling more attractive and relevant to children; increase teachers' knowledge on child trafficking; and help teachers to recognize children at-risk of dropping out and encourage them to take appropriate intervention methods. Teachers were introduced to relevant national and international laws on child trafficking, child rights and child labour.

3.7.1 Process outline

Educating teachers on their role in preventing child trafficking established the first line of defence in achieving the objectives of increasing overall retention rate of girls and boys in schools, and supporting the continued basic education of girls after grade 6. Teachers are often the first to know when children younger than 15 years have stopped attending school, and they can inform the district, which has a legal obligation to ensure children are educated for at least nine years. Training increased teachers' knowledge on slow learners and drop-outs, and gave pointers on how to interact with students and their parents.

- Established a district-level taskforce comprising the Head of the District Office of Education, education inspectors for elementary and junior high school, a lecturer, and an expert on curriculum and teaching methodology.
- Conducted a Joint District Workshop for the district-level task force, NGOs, members of academia and the press. The aim of the workshop was to discuss and finalize the teacher training module and its proposed topics of:
  - Child trafficking and efforts to combat it;
  - Children at risk of dropping out and those who have dropped out;
  - Contextual learning as an alternative learning method;
  - School-based management; and
  - Social relations between teachers and students.

- Prepared a training module, hand-outs and 15-minute documentary on anti-trafficking activities.
  - Produced a documentary film on the problems and causes of child trafficking, project activities, related district educational programmes, and responses from key people in local communities. The film was shown during the training to give teachers a clear picture on the magnitude of child trafficking and its roots.
  - Printed and distributed 100 modules, 600 handouts, and 100 documentaries to schools and education offices in the target area.
- Conducted three Teacher Training on Prevention of Child Trafficking workshops for elementary school teachers in the target subdistricts.
  - The first training took place 3-6 February 2005. There were 20 participant teachers (11 men and nine women), from elementary schools in Cikedung and Gabus Wetan.
  - The second training took place 19-21 April 2005. There were 20 participant teachers (11 men and nine women) from elementary schools in Cikedung and Gabus Wetan.
  - The third training took place 2-4 May 2005. There were 20 participant teachers (10 men and 10 women) from elementary schools in Cikedung and Gabus Wetan.
- Supported participant teachers in their respective schools in delivering messages on trafficking and improving the classroom environment to prevent children from dropping out.
  - Follow-up meetings and questionnaires were conducted to test the post-training knowledge of teacher participants. The District Office of Education and YKAI provided post-training support to teachers.

3.7.2 Partnerships

YKAI relied heavily on the cooperation and involvement of the District Office of Education and teachers. The District Office of Education supported the implementation of the training, particularly in guiding the format of the module; and is responsible for the follow-up training of teachers. The endorsement from the Ministry of Women's Empowerment was important as it communicated the importance of the initiative to local government officials and helped enlist on the ground support. ILO-IPEC provided full funding for the teacher training which cost an estimated US$19,084.

3.8 Catch-up education – Indramayu

Parallel to teacher training, YKAI offered catch-up education for children who recently dropped out of school. Classes began every three months and were offered from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. three times per week. The first session educated 135 girls, the second, 208. Both included girls at risk of being trafficked for the following reasons: they had been commercially sexually exploited or nearly trafficked; and/or their sisters, mothers, extended family members or neighbours had worked in prostitution. The girls received school supplies, such as books, pencils and case, and bags and were all mainstreamed to formal school. Monitoring revealed that after six months eight girls had dropped out again for reasons such as illness, forced marriage and learning difficulties. A third group of 80 girls and 20 boys participated in catch-up education from April to June 2006, although they were not officially part of the Phase II project activities.

3.8.1 Process outline

The catch-up education programme removed the traditional barriers to education for rural girls by offering free education at flexible hours. Interpersonal communication (IPC), such as in-home counselling, was used to persuade parents to send their children back to school. This created an enabling and supportive home environment for girls and boys to take advantage of learning opportunities. Teachers were involved in curriculum development, and thus 'owned' the curriculum and were more likely to follow the prescribed lesson plans.

- Organized meetings with education officials to ensure their active cooperation, including permission to use school facilities. Cooperation from education officials created an enabling environment for the project activity to take place and enhanced sustainability.
- Received permission to use school facilities and teachers as tutors for the programme.
- Contacted the local schools to facilitate mainstreaming the girls into formal schools.

- Identified 110 drop-out children in Cikedung subdistrict (Amis and Jambak villages) and 100 drop-out children in Gabus Wetan subdistrict (Gabus Kulon and Babakan Jaya villages). A major challenge was the lack of complete data on drop-out children at the village level.
- Visited homes of targeted children to get permission for children to participate. Conducted discussions at religious and community meetings, and employed other interpersonal communication methods to persuade reluctant parents.
- Set up a remedial education centre for the children living in the same village as the junior high school.
- Recruited and trained 15 teachers at the recommendation of headmasters.
- Conducted a teacher workshop on 28-29 April 2004 and 30 April 2004 to 1 May 2004 to establish catch-up education curriculum and syllabus.
- Monitored the progress of the children and took appropriate measure to help them cope with the new education situation.
- Mobilized the private sector to provide 100 scholarships to contribute to graduated catch-up students' continued education.

3.8.2 Partnerships

The catch-up education programme was successful because YKAI partnered with and received support from the District Office of Education. Local education officials gave space for the programme to operate in the local junior high school, and also helped by identifying teachers who would be suitable tutors for the children. Some groundwork had to be done to familiarize officials with the concept of catch-up education, but the initiative was largely accepted because of its potential to decrease drop-out rates.

Scholarships were provided by Bank Niaga, Indofood's Chiki Scholarship, Sukses Makmur and Freeport Indonesia for the girls to continue education in the formal education system. Junior high school students received RPS 200,000; senior high school students RPS 300,000. The scholarship only covered school fees – not those for registration, books and transportation. Many parents wanted the girls' entire educational expenses to be covered by the scholarship, but social workers told them that this type of support wasn't possible. The organization used the scholarship as motivation for parents to support and contribute to their girl's education.

3.9 Non-formal education – Indramayu

In 2005, Sanggar Teratai set up an open junior high school under the coordination of the Education Office of Cikedung, a subdistrict of Indramayu. So far, 23 children (12 boys and 11 girls) have participated in open school offered at the centre. In Gabus Wetan, open junior high school is offered on school grounds. As of last year, 75 children followed this programme, half of them having been encouraged by staff of the now-closed Sanggar Kancil.

Wiwin, 15 years old, lives too far from the junior high school in Gabus Wetan and says she wouldn't have been able to attend even if she had transportation because she has to help out her parents. "I have to take care of my younger brother and sister while my mother works," she says. "Now, with open school, I can help my parents and study."

The centre also offers Packet B, which provides both general and vocational education to primary school graduates or its equivalency, and to lower secondary school drop-outs. The programme is intended for children 13 to 15 years old; however, older students are also accepted. The District Office of Education authorized the centre to offer the courses and allows its graduates to sit for the equivalency exam. It grants YKAI scholarship money for each child to cover the cost of tuition, books, school supplies and uniforms.

Many see NFE as a win-win solution for the children in this village, says Yani, a social worker for Sanggar Teratai. "The parents are happy to receive the programme from Sanggar because their children can continue their schooling, help their parents and there is no fee for the school," he says. "The education officials are very supportive because the Sanggar is bettering the education situation of the community."

Vignette 2: No rest, no play

At the tender age of 13 years, Suriah left the familiar sights of meandering dirt roads and rice-paddies that enveloped her village. It is easy to imagine her closing her eyes on the way to Jakarta to prevent the memories of her hometown from spilling out in the form of tears. Suriah was determined to make a new home for herself at her employer's house in the city. She was also determined to help her family make ends meet. She couldn't know it at the time, but Suriah's dreams of economic determination would soon be drowned out by the immense workload and gruelling hours she would be forced to take on as a domestic.

Once she arrived in Jakarta, Suriah was confronted with a harsh reality. Every day – from 5:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. – Suriah worked. She woke up before the sun rose and cooked breakfast for her employer's sleeping family of four. She then braved the infamous Jakarta traffic to transport the two small children to school. When she returned, a pile of dirty dishes was waiting for her to scour. Next, she made the beds, scrubbed the toilets and floors, washed the clothes, and hung them to dry. Before fetching the children from school, she started dinner.

After dinner, her evening was a tiring echo of her morning routine. She washed the dishes and made sure the kids were in bed on time. If the clothes were dry, she ironed and put them away. By late evening she had just enough energy left to fall into bed for a few hours rest. "I never got any days off," says Suriah, now 17 years. "I was so tired and sad that I just gave up [2 months later] and called my brother to come and get me."

According to ILO Convention No. 182, Suriah experienced some of the conditions that render child domestic labour as one of the worst forms of child labour. Too often, these conditions include:

- excessive working hours;
- no or limited remuneration;
- abuse and exploitation;
- trafficking.
- no rest time or rest day;
- exposure to safety and health hazards;
- bonded labour; or

Aam, a former social worker for Sanggar Puri, the no-longer operational centre of activities in Bekasi, says she has helped child domestics who were not only overworked like Suriah, but also but physically abused. There was once an employer who was always angry with the child worker, Aam says. Anything done by the girl was wrong in her eyes. "She [the child] simply didn't understand. She had never worked before in her life and was asked (trafficked) to get a job in Bekasi by her uncle. The employer regularly lost her temper and kicked and hit the girl. When the girl came to the Sanggar, she couldn't concentrate on her studies; so Aam investigated her case. "Eventually we [YKAI] gave money to the girl to return home."

3.9.1 Process outline

Like the catch-up programme, the NFE programme removed the traditional barriers to education for rural girls by offering scholarships and classes at flexible hours. Access to education was increased for all children who live too far from schools to walk and have no alternative means of transportation. NFE 'piggy-backed' on the catch-up education initiative and provided a means of monitoring catch-up education participants who had entered the formal education system. Partnering with education officials ensured the legitimacy of the educational intervention and assisted in the monitoring and evaluation of the learning achievements of at-risk children. The programme also:

- Recruited and trained teachers.
- Reviewed the teaching materials for gender-appropriate messages.
- Reviewed the teaching methodologies.

Although Rokuyah was never physically abused, she says that at 12 years old she couldn't handle the workload given her. After four months, she left Jakarta. But she still felt obligated to help her parents, so she took a job as goat-herder in her village.

Herding goats is much more difficult than herding sheep as goats don't have a 'herd mentality'. Thus, if given a chance, each goat tends to stray its own way to find better foliage or grass. "That work [goat herder] was very had too," says Rukoyah, now 16 years. "I was so tired because I had to walk in the fields all day in the heat. I worked from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. every day, but I didn't want to start school because I wanted to help my parents."

Rukoyah says the village government gave her parents information about NFE offered at Sanggar Teratai, the centre of activities in Indramayu. Both she and Suriah enrolled in catch-up classes and now attend non-formal junior high school classes. They no longer hold formal jobs, but have responsibilities they tend to at home during the daytime.

"I am happy that I can go to school now and have an opportunity for education," Rukoyah says. Suriah echoes her sentiments, and says that if it weren't for NFE, she wouldn't be able to attend. "I have 11 cousins that I take care of," she says. "Even if that weren't the case, the school is too far from the village and I don't have public transport."

Now during her broadcast on community radio, Suriah urges parents to send their child to the centre for education. "If the reason [children don't attend school] is money, it is no reason because there is no charge for study at the Sanggar," she says. "All children should attend school."

- Collected information from schools regarding the monitoring of catch-up education participant girls who were not continuing studies in junior and senior high schools.
- Selected 160 at-risk girls and promoted long-term benefits of continuing education with the aim of reaching success for 100.
- Persuaded families to agree to girls' continued education and promised to cover education expenses with private-sector scholarships.
- Organized meetings with the schools officials and made necessary arrangements to re-enrol vulnerable girls in school.
- Ensured scholarships to each of the children to continue their education.
- Provided NFE classes according to national standards and professional recommendations
- Mainstreamed NFE students into formal school system and provided a gradual subsidy policy to parents who send their children to school.

3.9.2 Partnerships

Collaboration with education officials led to the identification of at-risk girls and boys, and ensured some form of monitoring if the children re-enrolled in school. Fundraising with the private sector provided vital scholarship funding for the children's continued access to education and lent credibility to the programme in the community.

3.10 Vocational training – Indramayu

Training beyond junior high school can open the door to economic opportunities other than domestic labour or sex work. As such, representatives from IGTC asked YKAI to help identify children at risk of trafficking with an aptitude and will to learn. After the children were identified, it took up to three months for some parents to allow girl children to leave home. The social worker made several home visits to educate parents on why girls need skills and told parents that if they allowed the child to train she would be able to find a good job in a factory.

This proved very difficult in some cases because parents preferred to send their girls to the Middle East to work as domestic labourers rather than having them earn a standard salary in a factory. In Indramayu, because of their past history, a lot of young girls end up in fancy places where they can make more money than in the garment industry, says Susie, Marketing Director for IGTC. "The parents don't realize what is going on with their daughters, and as a result their expectations of what the daughter can send back home is pretty high," she says. "The factory doesn't pay the family a lump sum of US$326 to US$543 [RPS 3 million to 5 million] to accept the daughter as do the traffickers; but we have to show parents the realities of sending their daughter abroad."

Sometimes parents were worried that training would blight opportunities for marriage, as girls in Indramayu tend to marry in their teens. But some mothers, who themselves married young, supported their daughter's decision to delay marriage and get training. "I sometimes worry about marriage, but I know education is important for girls because it's easier to get a job," said Waskem, an IGTC graduate's mother, who herself married at 15 years. "I hope she is successful and makes a good living."

Young people who train at IGTC receive a starting salary of US$130 to US$195 (RPS 1.2 million to 1.8 million) per month; a person with no training receives of US$43 to US$65 (RPS 400,000 to 600,000) per month, says Till Freyer, Chairman and Founder of IGTC. "With our certificate, they have a basic knowledge of what the job requires and can get promoted much faster than a newcomer without any previous experience," he says. Success rates for December 2005 are 94 per cent; as of July 2006, nearly 100 per cent. "We have more job offers today than graduates."

3.10.1 Process outline

As the garment industry in Indonesia is thriving and pays a decent salary, the relevance and quality of the training offers a real alternative to girls at risk of trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation and domestic labour. Young participant women become change agents in that they disprove commonly shared beliefs that hold sex work as the best way for young girls to make money. Trained and employed young women prove that girls can choose their path to economic success and independence.

- Assess curriculum and applicability of the technical courses and materials (for girls and boys), and link up with national technical universities, where feasible. (Include gender analysis.)
- Selection test given to 142 young people (86 girls and 56 boys) on 11-12 October 2004, 31 October 2004, and 11-13 December 2004 in Gabus Wetan and Cikedung subdistricts of Indramayu.
- Based on aptitude and willingness to learn, 50 young people, aged 17 to 22 years old, were selected to participate in the first six-month vocational training.
- The first 50 students (35 girls and 15 boys) began classes in January 2005 and received a US$450 scholarship from IGTC. Each scholarship covered tuition, room and board.
- The second 50 girl students (30 from Karawang and 20 from Indramayu) began classes in July 2005. ILO-IPEC funds supported 20 students; 30 received support from IGTC.
- YKAI monitored the progress of the students via monthly visitations to IGTC every month and gave motivation and support to overcome would-be obstacles.
- IGTC placed students in jobs at factories in Bandung, Cianjur, and Tangerang.

3.10.2 Partnerships

Both partners relied heavily on each other's expertise for the programme's success: vocational training and scholarship money for a majority of the young people was provided by IGTC; and YKAI identified at-risk students, employed interpersonal communication to motivate parents to allow girl children to attend, and served as a liaison between parents, students and IGTC.

In terms of funding, the first 50 students to attend vocational training were sponsored by IGTC; of the second group of 50 students, 30 were sponsored by IGTC and 20 by ILO-IPEC. The next group of students began training in July 2006; all 36 received full scholarships from IGTC. "Training greatly affects their quality of life," Freyer says. "Trained machine operators start at a higher salary compared to untrained, and the good graduates have the potential to soon be promoted to production supervisor which means increased income."

4 Outcomes and analysis

4.1 Overview

The Regional Project to Combat Trafficking in Children for Labor and Sexual Exploitation, and Preventing Eliminating Exploitative Child Domestic Work through Education and Training have jointly contributed to the prevention of child trafficking for the purposes of domestic labour and sexual exploitation. Project activities contributed to the overall objectives of promoting change in the policy and creating an enabling environment through awareness raising, policy advocacy and direct support to policy development; and implementing direct intervention programmes to prevent children from domestic employment, to protect and educate existing child workers and to withdraw those workers younger than the minimum age.

4.2 Outcomes and analysis in Bekasi and Kerawang

In Bekasi, participant child domestic labourers cited relief from heavy workloads, opportunities for education, and a chance to socialize with their peers as primary benefits of participation. In May 2005, 18 child domestic labourers took the equivalency exam; 16 passed and two did not. Of the 88 who participated in vocational training, only six dropped out. Of the 50 withdrawn child domestic labourers, all 50 were registered in formal schooling at the time of the last progress report; however, monitoring has proven expensive and labour intensive as many of the withdrawn children lack access to a phone and live as far as 300 kilometres away from the centre. The project activity in Bekasi, however, lacked a clear exit strategy as the centre of activities closed down and children who had come to depend on the services could no longer access them.

Though no behaviour change monitoring took place, participants reported that their knowledge on education and anti-trafficking had increased through programming on Radio Pelangi. However, since the launch of community radio the rate of primary school graduates entering junior high school increased from 30 per cent to 98 per cent in 2005-2006. Anecdotal evidence, such as reports from participant children and community members, does refer to the radio station as a source of motivation and provides qualitative measures of the project activity's impact.

Income-poverty and its role in girl children's entrance into the domestic labour market were briefly addressed in Karawang. Twenty-five families of school-enrolled girl children were identified for the micro-finance programme and given a small loan. While this conceivably led to some improvement in the participants' lives, no means of verification was established to ensure that the activity met the project objectives aside from basic budgetary training. It will be important to mobilize additional resources to continue this valuable work.

Influencing policy on child domestic labour was the most difficult milestone to reach, as the Indonesian political setting doesn't treat child domestic labour as actual work in need of protective laws. In general, there is little rule of law and a gap between the law and enforcement. Furthermore, existing policies have not reached a consensus on the issue: the National Plan of Action on the Worst Forms of Child Labor does not prioritize child domestic labour, although it is identified in Presidential Decree 59/2002 as a priority. It was in this lukewarm environment, however, that the programme successfully initiated the drafting of an anti-trafficking perda in Karawang district.

4.3 Outcomes and analysis in Indramayu

Undoubtedly, more children were educated and the overall retention rate of girls and boys was increased because of catch-up education offered at Sanggar Teratai in Indramayu District. Of the first 135 catch-up education participants, 91 enrolled in formal education; two enrolled in Packet B; and 42 dropped out because they had either gotten married or needed to work. Of the second 208 catch-up students, 96 continued to formal school. Compared to the original target of providing 300 children with catch-up education, the achievements were higher than expected with 343 participants. The goal of mainstreaming 100 per cent of the participants into the formal education system fell short by about 20 per cent. Based on information from the Head of District, the catch-up education programme has contributed to a 40 per cent increase in primary school graduates enrolling in junior high school in Amis and Jambak villages.

NFE promoted the objective of supporting continued basic education of girls after completion of grade 6. Monitoring revealed that two participants dropped out because of work, one moved to formal junior high school, and another was prohibited to continue by her parents. However many of the girls in attendance frequently cited that NFE was the only way for them to study because of household chores, outside work, and primary caretaker roles assumed when the mother worked as an overseas domestic labourer. This is a clear victory, as drop-out is cited as a common reason for entry into child domestic labour and commercial sex work. Some children lived in villages too far from schools to walk, and others were from families that couldn't afford fees for registration, tuition, books, supplies and/or transportation. These children reported they were happy to attend the NFE offered at the centre of activities and had plans to pursue higher education if scholarship assistance continued.

Vocational training was most successful, as participant children and young people had success rates ranging from 94 per cent to 100 per cent in finding jobs after graduation. The initial target of the project activity was 40, although 136 participants have received vocational training during the span of the project. An upgraded monitoring system was suggested as a measure to ensure that graduates are not facing troubles and quitting their jobs. "Graduates don't report," said Johann Hoepflinger, Director of IGTC. "For the time being we place them in jobs, but it's their responsibility to come to us if there is a problem," he says. "We need to change that because if someone is dropping out we need to find them another job and we don't have the capacity to do that [monitor] alone." The need for a better screening process was also cited, as some participants graduated from the training, but then returned home to herd goats, for example.

Parallel to educational access, the teacher training was essential in that it recognized the teacher's role in preventing drop-out and educated the educators on the causes and effects. Teachers were instructed on how to make learning more enjoyable for students and how to intervene in cases where children are on the verge of dropping out. Before the training, teachers said they were helpless if parents directly asked girls to quit school in order to get married, even if the final exam was approaching. Teachers also said that primary school students who discontinued because of economic reasons received a 'blue-card' (which indicated eligibility for fee exemption), but still chose to dropout. After the training, teachers said they understood the correlation between early marriage, dropping out of school and child trafficking and made a commitment to prevent trafficking among school and community children. A weakness was that behavioural objectives were not firmly established and teachers' behaviour was not formerly assessed pre- and post-training; therefore, it was difficult to evaluate how much knowledge teachers had gained and whether they demonstrated positive behaviour change as a result.

5 Future direction

5.1 Overview

As of February 2006, the Regional Project to Combat Trafficking in Children for Labor and Sexual Exploitation and Preventing and Eliminating Exploitative Child Domestic Work through Education and Training are over. YKAI has been able to continue some project activities with contributions from the District Office of Education and the private sector. In November 2006, YKAI submitted a proposal to the Japanese Grassroots Grants project. It also approached visible companies, such as Microsoft Indonesia to attract other potential donors in the area. There is a window of opportunity for ILO-IPEC and YKAI to further engage the Ministry of Education in the fight against child domestic labour as the NFE offered at centres of activities and vocational and skills training through YKAI interventions are aligned with the standards set by the Ministry of Education.[37]

5.2 Challenge in Bekasi and success in Karawang

Project officials said the issue of child domestic labourers is not a public one in Bekasi, so YKAI found it difficult to financially support the Bekasi project. This lack of support culminated with the May 2006 closure of Sanggar Puri. A skeletal programme operates in the forms of vocational training at a teacher's home on weekends and NFE at a former social worker's home on weekdays.

There are no plans to close down Sanggar As Syifa, although support from ILO-IPEC has ended. YKAI plans to intensify its fundraising efforts in the private sector to keep the centre functioning. Radio Pelangi will increase its coverage from a 10-kilometre radius to a 40-kilometre radius with a new radio transmitter tower donated by the Karawang District Government. In terms of increasing the station's network and other capacities, YKAI approached 68RH Radio, a former community radio station, with a proposal to develop a network with existing community radio stations through network collaboration. The commercial radio station would conduct free training for network stations to develop radio management, and programme and broadcast technique skills. In preparation for this collaboration with 68 RH Radio, YKAI is in consultation with ILO-IPEC. The radio station was implemented in part as a tool to create an enabling and supportive environment for the anti-trafficking perda; however, the implementation of the new law will depend on local leadership, which is undergoing a change.

5.3 Strong support in Indramayu

Efforts to improve the overall quality of education, support basic education, and increase retention rates will continue through catch-up education, NFE and expanded teacher training. The fourth catch-up education class will be offered at Sanggar Teratai and is currently promoted on Community Radio. A goal of catch-up education is to mainstream students into the formal education system; however, for students who are unable to attend formal school, YKAI will continue to offer NFE at the centre of activities. Project staff hopes to expand the NFE to neighbouring subdistricts because trafficking is a problem common to all regions in Indramayu, project staff say.

Teachers who have participated in the teacher training have committed to help increase retention rates throughout the district. Participant teachers say they want to take a more active role in schools and communities to prevent drop-out and child trafficking. As a first step the teachers said they would discuss ways for active involvement with their colleagues vis-à-vis an official agenda item. In the meantime, the plan is for trained teachers to train other teachers in their respective schools.

Parallel to the primary and secondary school education initiatives, vocational training will continue and hopefully expand. A recent group of 36 students began classes in July 2006; all were sponsored by IGTC with support from the Indonesian Rotary Club. Representatives from IGTC suggested a community education programme to increase knowledge on the garment industry and the dangers of sending girls abroad to work as domestic labourers.

Specific factors have lead to both projects' sustainability, such as YKAI's strong partnership with local education authorities and its ability to raise money in the private sector. For example Bank Niaga, Indofood, Freeport Indonesia and ITGC have together contributed about US$20,000 in scholarship money throughout Phase II of the project. In addition the project has taken a different route to communicate child-trafficking prevention to participant communities, says Pandji Putranto, former Senior Programme Officer for ILO-IPEC Jakarta. "In the past, organizations have typically used leaflets and brochures; but we are not a reading population, so the use of radio community and social mobilization made the project stand out," he says.

5.4 Replicating the success in Indramayu

Replicating the projects will depend on certain pre-conditions: An NGO should have a proven track record dealing with child issues, possess human resource capacity and a good network. It is also important that the organization has a good working relationship with the government and that measures are taken to build trust. "For example, in the beginning they [the government] did not want us to use the term 'child labour'," says Mr. Putranto. "They wanted us to use 'children compelled to work for socio-economic reasons'. I didn't agree with the term but I didn't make fuss as long as we could agree on the issue itself. Later, after trust was built, we could use the term 'child labour'." In the beginning, try to avoid the controversial approach to fights with the village government, he says. "Even if we have to move slowly in the beginning, we prefer to do so than to make enemies".

Organizations are advised to secure support from potential donors in more ways than financial contributions. "They [NGOs] may require more than just money; they may need technical support," Mr. Putranto says. "I came to project sites regularly and met with project staff every week and we discussed the project and substance details." Capacity building was not part of the project design; however, as Putranto says, the capacity building of partners and relevant stakeholders can and did take place in more ways than one.

YKAI is proposing an office branch in the Indramayu District to further its ability to work with the local government on anti-trafficking issues. A branch will allow project staff to connect directly with the local government and will give Indramayu independence to pursue the issues that are most relevant to the district.

Preventing child trafficking will depend on the capacity of YKAI and partners to sustain project activities, says Nova, a social worker at Sanggar Teratai in Indramayu. "So many times, the anti-trafficking programmes have not been successful because they run for a limited time only," she says. "We hope to maintain and expand to other areas because trafficking is a problem in neighbouring areas as well."

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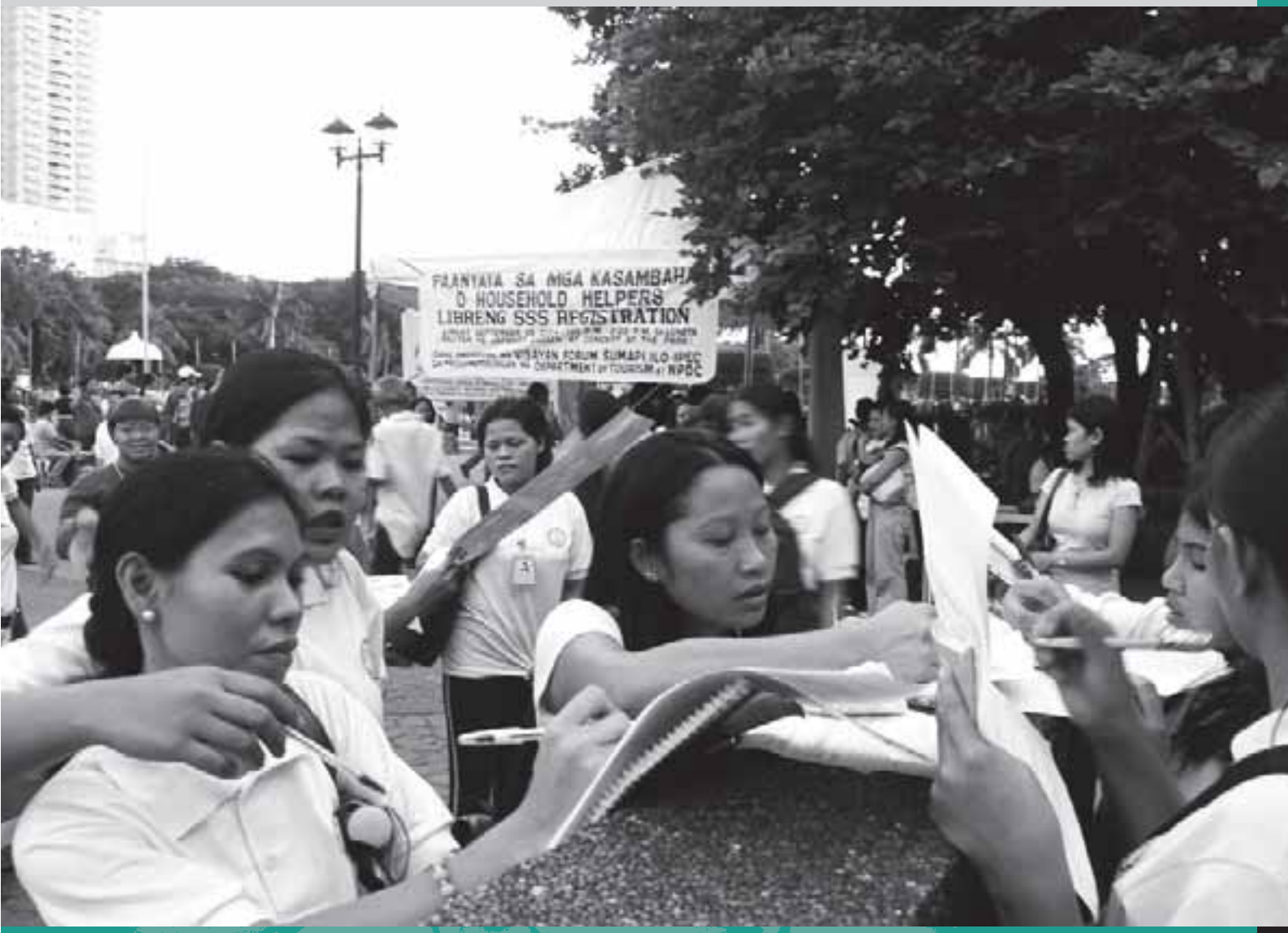

Targeting child domestic workers

Contents

1 Context

1.1 Overview

Nearly 70,000[1] women emigrate from the Philippines each year to serve as domestic workers in more developed countries. The remittances domestic workers send back home are an important contribution to the Philippines economy, and serve as a crucial financial lifeline for many families.

However, it is within the Philippines that even greater numbers, particularly of children, support themselves and their families by working in the homes of others. The figures are uncertain; labouring in the privacy of others' homes, they are often described as an 'invisible army of workers'. According to the government's Labor Force Survey conducted in 2002[2], the number of domestic workers fluctuated between 574,000 and 631,000 from January to October. The National Statistics Office's 2001 'Survey on children 5-17 years old'[3] found that out of four million children who were employed, 230,000 were working in private households and 82 per cent were girls. When such work involves long working hours, heavy workloads and exposure to verbal, physical and sexual abuse, it is considered a worst form of child labour according to the widely ratified ILO Convention No. 182. Visayan Forum, an NGO that runs a programme advocating the rights of domestic workers with a focus on children, estimates that there are 2.5 million domestic workers in the Philippines, and as many as one million of them are children, the majority of whom are girls. According to Roland Pacis, a lawyer with Visayan Forum, "Our country is trying to create an economy on the backs of children.''

1.2 Culture

This form of child labour persists in the Philippines because, according to ILO findings, "domestic labour is both an integral and invisible part of Filipino society. The practice of employing domestic help is historically embedded in Filipino culture."[4] Jerome Alacantara, who heads the organizing unit of Visayan Forum, feels that it is an outgrowth from the period in Filipino history when slavery was a normal practice. "It's seen as natural. Teachers have child domestic labourers. Even some of our NGO partners think it's normal," he says. Domestic labour is so common in the Philippines that "even the urban poor have domestic labourers from the countryside," states Pacis. And in a country where four million children are working, domestic labour is often viewed as a relatively safe occupation for a child.

Visayan Forum became involved in the issue of domestic labour because about 40 per cent[5] of domestic labourers come from the Visayas Islands, making the region the largest supplier of household help. The Bicol and Mindanao Islands also contribute significant numbers. The Philippines archipelago is home to many ethnic groups and languages; due to their gender, different ethnicities, skin colour, languages and cultural practices, domestic workers are often maltreated and looked down upon by many employers. As a consequence, they can develop low self-esteem, which prevents them from reporting or leaving abusive situations. Pacis explains, "They come to believe abuse is part of the job. Because they have no protection outside, they can't run away. There is no one to call for help and they fear they will be cast out. So they end up suffering."

1.3 Push and pull factors

Although domestic labour is not valued by most members of society, it is an integral part of the economy in the Philippines. There are several factors which have contributed to its place as an economic cornerstone: urban labourers with a better education tend to find work in factories or industrial jobs, and thus are not interested in domestic labour; and many urban women require a domestic helper to tend to their households in order to work outside the home to supplement their family's income. The pull of higher salaries overseas, enhanced status as an overseas worker and greater independence has led to an outflow of domestic labourers – this has created a shortfall in the country that is sometimes filled by children. Some employers prefer to hire children because when they are separated from their families, they have less self-confidence, are easier to control, can be paid less and sometimes not paid at all.[6] On the supply side of the equation, poverty and lack of access to quality education push young women from rural areas towards migrating for jobs as domestic labourers. They often begin working in homes in the provinces and eventually work their way to the bigger cities. Manila is the urban centre with the highest number of domestic labourers.[7]

The issue of domestic labour and migration is intertwined with trafficking, child trafficking, and forced labour. Young women are enticed by recruiters to leave home against the wishes of their parents. Lured by promises of good salaries and working conditions, they find themselves trapped in abusive situations. When salaries are lower than expected, or not even paid at all, the girls end up borrowing from their employers and find themselves sinking into debt bondage.

1.4 The promise of education

For many child domestic workers, an important reason for entering the field is the hope or opportunity to obtain an education and support their families. According to the 1995 Labor Force Family Support Survey, 83.7 per cent of domestic labourers complete elementary school, but only 36.9 per cent finished high school.[8] Although 56.7 per cent enter high school, there is a drop-out rate of 19.8 per cent. The statistics, however, may not capture some of the youngest and most heavily-abused domestic labourers, who are often in the provinces and hidden from census-takers by their employers. While 15 years is the legal working age in the Philippines, many child domestic labourers, particularly in the provinces, are younger.

Cecilia Flores-Oebanda, Founder of Visayan Forum, explains a typical story of child domestic labour: "For many domestic labourers, their prime motivation in taking the job was the chance to get an education. Next is the desire to support their family. They are hungry for a chance to learn to read and write. Employers, however, don't always keep their promises. One of the domestic labourers' chores is to take their employers' children to school, and wait outside to pick them up. You can see it in their eyes. They want to go. It's torture for a child."

Some families keep their domestic labourers on call 24 hours a day. Their working day can start as early as 3:00 a.m. There is no governmental mechanism to monitor working hours. While many child domestic labourers want to go to school, the choice is a difficult one. Night schools, Sunday schools and skills training have been developed for them, but they need permission from their employers. If this is given, the challenge is being able to cope with a heavy workload and schoolwork. With their low salaries, most children cannot afford the tuition fees and related expenses. In addition, some teachers are not prepared to deal with domestic labourers and the pressures that surround their daily life. Completing the five years of schooling required to graduate (while working) is difficult. For some children, it is impossible.

1.5 Lack of legislative enforcement

Government policy states that domestic labourers are entitled to an education. Article 146 of the Labor Code[9] provides that all house helpers under the age of 18 years should be given the opportunity to gain an elementary education, with the cost of education being part of the house helper's compensation, unless otherwise stipulated. The Labor Code also requires that domestic labourers be given contracts, and it sets minimum wages with different amounts in different localities. However, these articles are not always observed. The Republic Act 9231 (2003) – An Act Providing for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor and Affording Stronger Protection for the Working Child – enforces the governmental action taken to eradicate child labour. In section 4 of this law it provides for "access to Education and Training for Working Children." This is a major theme in the development and advocacy of the rights of child domestic labourers.

At the micro-level, the number of cases Visayan Forum deals with in which domestic labourers have not been paid at all, much less paid the minimum wage, is a testament to the lack of enforcement of regulations enacted to protect these vulnerable young women. No reliable information exists on what percentages of workers have signed contracts, but most arrangements do not appear to be that formal.

On the macro-level, the government recognizes the need to move up the ladder as far as education and a developed, skilled workforce are concerned. The Philippines National Medium Term Development Plan (from 2004 to 2010) stipulates support for Education for All – with the aim "to increase the country's competitiveness, mobilize and disseminate knowledge to upgrade our technologies and increase our people's productivity."

In 2004, President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo signed Executive Order 356 instructing the Department of Education to promote alternative learning systems, an important vehicle that allows working children and adults an opportunity for education. It states, "It is a declared State policy, to promote the right of all citizens to quality basic education and such education accessible to all by providing all Filipino children in the elementary level and free education in the high school level. Such education shall also include alternative learning systems for out-of school youth and adult learners."[10]

More resources need to be allocated for these programmes. Therefore, strong efforts from the private sector and non-governmental organizations, such as Visayan Forum, are required for domestic labourers, and the Philippines, to realize their dreams of a better future.

2 Programme description

2.1 Overview

The Kasambahay Program was developed in order to pursue the rights and recognition of domestic labourers. Kasambahay is a phrase, meaning 'household companion', coined by Visayan Forum to give domestic labourers an identity and a positive term to describe themselves. The programme was a natural outgrowth of the work already being done by Visayan Forum. Founded by Cecelia Flores-Oebanda in 1991, Visayan Forum began by working with internal migrants. The Visayas, a poverty-stricken group of islands within The Philippines archipelago, is the source of the country's largest numbers of migrants.[11] As Visayan Forum's work developed, they found that significant numbers of migrants were domestic workers, and the majority of child domestic workers were girls. Flores-Oebanda established the Kasambahay Program in 1995 in response to the needs of this group.

2.2 Beneficiaries

Children and their families are the main beneficiaries of the programme because the programme has a special focus on child domestic labourers. But adult domestic labourers also benefit from this programme, and indirectly so do the families that employ them. Oebanda says, "Giving kasambahay more security is good for our security in that the domestic labourer is capable of raising and educating the children of the employers' families. Protecting their interests protects their family." Beyond that, society as a whole benefits.

2.3 Objectives

Empowerment of domestic labourers, particularly girls, is the overarching goal of the project. There are several objectives that contribute to their empowerment. One of the major stepping stones was the Batas Kasambahay, or Magna Carta of Household Helpers, a piece of legislation that delineates the rights, privileges and parameters for terms of employment of domestic labourers. The bill states that children cannot work as domestic labourers until they reach the age of 15 years. Visayan Forum has been lobbying to pass the Batas Kasambahay for the past decade, and Oebanda feels confident that they are close to success in terms of the enactment of this framework for legal protection.

Other objectives include building the capacities of various stakeholders, such as the kasambahay themselves, advocacy groups, schools and community groups; building community awareness and participation in addressing the causes and conditions of domestic workers; and to institutionalize the participation of children in cross-cutting development (of a social, economic and political nature).

The formation and building of an organized network of domestic labourers was another important objective. Thus, Samahan at Ugnayan ng mga Manggagawang Pantahanan sa Pilipinasin (SUMAPI) – also known as The Association and Linkages of Domestic Workers in the Philippines – was established in 1995. It now claims 8,000 members around the Philippines and is still growing. It provides services for domestic labourers and lobbies national and local governments to pass legislation and programmes to better domestic working conditions.

Vignette 1: From guerrilla leader to social activist

Commander Liway was surrounded. Crouching in a foxhole and under heavy fire from Philippines government troops, she decided to surrender. The soldiers could barely believe it when they saw that one of the most infamous leaders of the communist New People's Army during the early 1980s was an attractive young woman. As she watched in terror, the soldiers shot two of her comrades, and then carted her off to prison.

She told interrogators that her real name was Cecilia Flores-Oebanda from the island of Negros Occidental. She had joined the New People's Army (NPA) to fight injustice and poverty. Few families were poorer than hers. As a child, Cecilia picked through garbage dumps for food to eat, and scrap metal to sell. Ostracized by classmates because she smelled from the dumpsites, Cecilia nonetheless was a good student, and won an athletic scholarship to university because of her swimming prowess. After reading the works of Mao Tse-Tung, she decided to join the NPA.

Her time in prison didn't break her will to fight injustice. It convinced her, however, that there were more effective ways to fight than with a gun. Released from prison in a 1986 amnesty after the fall of Dictator Ferdinand Marcos, Oebanda gravitated towards social work and activism. Some of the poorest people in the Philippines are the migrants, many of them from the Visayas Islands. With roots in the Visayas herself, Oebanda founded Visayan Forum in 1991 to advocate for the rights of poor migrants. Among them were many child domestic labourers.

This situation prompted her to launch the Kasambahay Program within Visayan Forum, focusing on child domestic labourers. As many of them are trafficked, she also set up an anti-trafficking programme. "These issues are all related," Oebanda says. In 2005, her efforts won her the Anti-Slavery Award from London-based Anti-Slavery International.[12]

Oebanda wages the fight for kasambahay rights on several fronts. She lobbies the national government to pass the Magna Carta for Kasambahay, a bill to protect domestic labourers. She helped establish SUMAPI, the first organization of domestic labourers. She raises funds, pushes for education, and shelters abused and runaway young women. Few of the young girls under her care realize the soft-spoken, nurturing woman watching over them was once a guerrilla leader.

"The importance of these young women to our economy and to our homes is often ignored and unappreciated," Oebanda says. "But they are not dumb. They are learning, so better to give them opportunities now." You can bet that as long as the kasambahay need her, Oebanda will be fighting for them.

2.4 Advocacy

The Kasambahay Program provides several services for domestic labourers, but its main role is advocacy, and its objectives are achieving long-term social changes. A cornerstone within that objective is changing attitudes. Encouraging respect and recognition of the rights, contributions and value of domestic labourers among government, society, employers and within the communities of domestic workers themselves is crucial to their efforts. Advocacy is conducted on several levels. At the governmental level, Visayan Forum and its partners have lobbied for the passage of the Magna Carta for Kasambahay, the national law designed to protect the rights of domestic labourers. Visayan Forum has also lobbied local governments to institute local laws protecting kasambahay in the absence of a national law. Their most notable success in this regard was the passage of laws in Quezon City, a major satellite city adjacent to Manila in 20TK. At the community level, Visayan Forum lobbies local schools to accept and design classes for kasambahay, and lobbies community groups to include kasambahay in child protection activities and other activities to protect community members.

Visayan Forum also works with international organizations, such as the ILO, to organize and attend international conferences with labour groups and groups representing domestic labourers from other countries in order to exchange information and broaden their lobby coalition. Along with Anti-Slavery International, Child labourers in Asia and the Global March Against Child Labor, Visayan Forum co-organized the Southeast Asia Capacity Building towards Sustainable Advocacy for Child Domestic Laborers seminar in Manila in October 2003. Visayan Forum also convened the National Domestic Laborers Summit in Marikina City, the Philippines, in September 2005. This was attended by government officials, representatives of international organizations, such as the ILO, and a variety of NGOs working on issues related to domestic labourers. These are just a few of the workshops and seminars that Visayan Forum has helped organize or in which it has participated.

2.5 Funding

Programmes cost money, especially when they involve a diverse and demanding range of efforts. While partners such as the Catholic Church, local governments and the Department of Education, and corporations such as Microsoft, are making their own contributions, Visayan Forum still needs its own funding sources.

The Forum receives funding from a variety of sources, such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), UNICEF and Caritas of Switzerland. Visayan Forum has also signed MoUs with all its partners and funding partners. The ILO has been an important source of financial and technical assistance for the Kasambahay Program, ever since its inception in 1995. Under the IPEC four-year project supporting the Philippine Time Bound Program on the elimination of the worst forms of child labour, Visayan Forum has obtained substantial funding to implement a two-year action programme called 'Targeting the Child Domestic Workers Sector Within the Philippine Time Bound Program on the Worst Forms of Child Labor.'[13] With the completion in 2006 of the IPEC-supported action programme on child domestic workers, it is important to continue the work through the mobilization of additional resources. The accomplishments of the action programme will serve as the basis for future action that would continually enhance the overall Kasambahay Program of the Foundation.

2.6 Innovative by nature

By its very nature, the Kasambahay Program is an innovation, as it is not traditional for domestic workers to be either engaged or organized. The programme is essentially the first of its kind in the Philippines, and contains innovative facets. Programme workers do outreach in parks, schools and the streets. Crucially, they also do outreach at the port. The port on Manila Bay is the main entry point to the capital for domestic labourers, migrants, runaways or victims of trafficking. The programme finds ways to educate these children through organizing classes for them. The whole notion of an organization for domestic labourers, much less child domestic labourers, did not exist in The Philippines before Visayan Forum helped establish SUMAPI.

3 Process

3.1 Strategies to tackle resistance

Because having a child domestic worker is such a traditional practice, Visayan Forum faced significant resistance in tackling the issue and applied the following three strategies in response:

- Establishing SUMAPI: Helping kasambahay form and run their own organization helps empower them and builds their own capacities for management, advocacy and self-protection.
- Creating an enabling legal environment for domestic workers: An important element of this is the Magna Carta for Household Helpers, the national legislation for which Visayan Forum has been lobbying for nearly a decade. This has been difficult enough to get through the national legislature that SUMAPI has been creating champions on the ground to lobby local governments to come up with their own legislation on the local level. These local laws can provide policies that can not only register domestic workers, but can also provide services for them. This kind of local ownership increases the likelihood of sustainability.

- Providing services for kasambahay: Services include crisis centres, halfway houses, psychosocial interventions and educational opportunities.

3.2 Education strategies

The Department of Education is an important partner. It is providing special classes for kasambahay to gain an education on a part-time basis in public schools, in places such as Quezon and Batangas cities. Teachers are also being trained to spot signs of abuse among their kasambahay students. In the field of education, Visayan Forum takes four approaches:

- Influencing educational institutions such as schools and religious groups to come up with programmes tailored towards domestic labourers.
- Institutionalizing those educational programmes so they are not simply one-off opportunities.
- Using partnerships for education. For instance, Visayan Forum now has an agreement with Microsoft to provide some kasambahay students with computers and classes on how to use them. The courses are customized for the young women, and when they finish they will receive a certificate from the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, a government partner. These computer classes are given in a school run by a church, another partner.
- Lobbying local government units to provide and institutionalize the funding for these education programmes.

3.3 A constellation of partners

The Kasambahay Program works with a constellation of partners and stakeholders. The brightest star among them is SUMAPI, the domestic workers' organization. SUMAPI does much of the nuts and bolts groundwork of recruiting, educating and helping domestic workers, along with lobbying partners and governments.

Within the framework of the National Program Against Child Labor (NPACL), Visayan Forum works with organizations that are members of the National Child Labor Committee. These organizations include government agencies, workers' groups, employers' organizations, selected NGOs and international organizations. Under the leadership of the Department of Labor and Employment, the NPACL aims to eliminate the exploitative and worst forms of child labour, remove children below 18 years of age from hazardous work, as well as protect and rehabilitate abused and exploited working children.

The partners involved varies with each locality, but in every one faith-based organizations are present – mainly the Catholic Church, as Catholicism is the predominant religion of The Philippines. Various schools also partner with the programme to provide education to child domestic workers. The Don Bosco Technical Training Institute offers vocational training to domestic workers. NGO partner Plan International (Philippines) also provides alternative learning systems, or NFE, that both child and adult domestic workers can attend. The Philippines NGO Coalition helps monitor adherence to the Convention of the Rights of the Child. The Bishops and Business Conference also helps lobbying efforts.

Local government units, particularly barangay (community) councils, are important partners as they are the eyes and ears of the communities and help set community standards. Within the barangays the Bantay Bata sa Komunidad (BBK), or Community Child Watch Network, monitor the condition of child workers and are on the watch for abuse.

The programme also works with various international partners, such as ILO, UNICEF, USAID, Caritas of Switzerland, Anti-Slavery International, the International Children's Trust and Terre Des Hommes of the Netherlands.

Recently, the Kasambahay Program secured a partnership with Microsoft, which will provide computers and training for a limited number of child domestic workers attending schools.

3.4 Coordinating a coalition

Partnerships are used in various ways by Visayan Forum depending upon the nature and capabilities of those involved. While having such a wide range of partners is certainly a sign of strength, it could also be unwieldy and difficult to manage. Each week, Visayan Forum convenes a partners meeting in which they review the progress each is making, plan strategies and discuss problems. This regular coordination of efforts helps make the programme more effective. An important aspect is that it helps coordinate the lobbying efforts for legislation.

One example of effective partnership has been with the Catholic Church and other faith-based organizations. Visayan Forum approached most of the parishes it now works with for initial help. Some, however, were already working on the issue in their own way, for example, Religious of Mary Immaculate (RMI). This order, founded in Madrid in 1853 and now present in 21 countries, has a focus on ministering to the needs of young women who are household servants. RMI has been in the Philippines since 1983 and runs four 'houses' in Manila, Quezon City, Cebu and Muntinlupa City, where it provides schooling and shelters for kasambahay. It is in RMI schools that Microsoft is installing computers and teaching classes.

The Catholic Church is an invaluable partner in lobbying, not just directed at the national and local governments, but also at employers. Due to the strong Catholic beliefs of most Filipinos, the nuns are able to gain access to the homes of employers. They use that access to observe the conditions of the young women and to try and persuade employers to do the right things by the young women and let them have an education. With their strong presence and respect in the community, they often receive intelligence about girls who are not receiving an education, or who are in difficult or abusive circumstances with employers. Obeanda adds, "We bring in Catholic nuns to talk to the employer, [or] even the parish priest. They tell them 'What you are doing with your domestic labourers is a responsibility to God'."

The lobbying efforts of the partners have had considerable success in a few localities. An important one is Quezon City, a major urban centre just outside of Manila. The mayor of Quezon City has been a strong supporter of kasambahay rights, and has used his position to ensure that the Department of Education and schools in his city provide opportunities for kasambahay. He has also tried to sensitize law enforcement to kasambahays' situations when it comes to abuse.

At a more grassroots level, Visayan Forum works with barangay councils to find child domestic labourers who are experiencing abuse or other negative situations. The BBK also helps out in this manner. Composed mostly of women from the communities, they provide some of the best intelligence into the home life of these girls.

3.5 Partnerships at the ports

If a kasambahay is in an abusive situation or being denied education, then Visayan Forum or SUMAPI will be alerted by partners such as the Church, teachers, barangay councils or the BBK. The Forum also runs an outreach programme and halfway house at the port on Manila Bay. The port is an entry point for young women who have been trafficked, recruited or are just migrating on their own to Manila from the outer islands in the archipelago. Visayan Forum workers have established a cooperative network among the port police, dockworkers, shipping agents, boat captains and even snack sellers to spot young women who appear to be trafficked or migrating on their own. Forum workers then approach the young women and try to determine their circumstances; if they need help they give the girls some basic literature so they know how to contact the Forum, SUMAPI and other agencies that could help them if they are in trouble. Forum workers have been cursed at, had stones thrown at them, and been threatened by traffickers and recruiting agents. Some of the more responsible agents, however, actually cooperate with Forum workers and provide intelligence on trafficked youth.

A young person who expresses a need for help can be sheltered in the halfway house at the port. Depending upon their circumstances, their families may be contacted, or they may transfer to the Forum's other shelters in Manila. They may also be referred to the authorities. The Forum's shelter in the Santa Ana District of Manila is more homely, and while its capacity is limited, girls have stayed there as long as one or two years while they receive psychosocial support and counselling and are eventually integrated into school or returned to their families. The shelter has high walls and no sign indicating what it is in order to protect kasambahay from being located by former employers who want retribution against them for running away or filing abuse charges.

4 Outcomes and analysis

4.1 Measuring success by progress

Visayan Forum's Kasambahay Program has made strong progress in reaching most of its objectives. The main objectives are to obtain legal protection for domestic and child domestic labourers; to raise awareness about the conditions and rights of kasambahay; to organize a network of domestic labourers to be managed by domestic labourers; to increase educational opportunities for kasambahay; and to rescue and shelter abused domestic labourers. At least some degree of success has been achieved in all these areas.

Perhaps the area where Visayan Forum has had the least success is in having the Magna Carta for Kasambahay passed by the national government. The Forum has been lobbying for this legislation for a decade. While they are optimistic it will eventually become a law, they are not confident that it will be passed during this legislative session. "Our colourful political events always seem to get in the way," Pacis states, referring to the coups, attempted coups, people's revolutions and other factors that have contributed to a series of weak and unstable governments.

Nonetheless, thanks to lobbying efforts by Visayan Forum and its partners, several important municipalities have passed their own laws and regulations regarding domestic labourers and their employers. While there are only a few at this point, they notably include both Quezon City, the largest city in the Philippines with a population of 2.17 million[14], and Batangas, a major port city of 264,000[15] on the main island of Luzon and an important gateway to Manila. These are positive and important first steps. These cities can lead by example, destroying the myth that this sector is too informal to be governed or regulated.

4.2 SUMAPI – Small but effective

SUMAPI, the organization of domestic labourers, now has 8,000 members across the country. This is a relatively small number considering that Visayan Forum estimates that there are about a million kasambahay. Nonetheless, the organization is innovative due to the fact that it is run by kasambahay or former kasambahay themselves. Just a few years ago it would have been unimaginable for household helpers to have an organization, much less manage it on their own.

SUMAPI has played a pivotal role in lobbying for legislation and raising awareness of the conditions and rights of domestic labourers. "I'm not a SUMAPI member, but I've learned about my rights by attending their orientation," says Gosie Maaghop, and 18-year-old domestic labourer from Leyte who is employed in Batangas City and attends night school at Batangas National High School. "My employer knows about SUMAPI too. He has no problem with it, and doesn't mind that I go to their seminars." Adds Mary Grace Samonte, a 16-year-old domestic labourer attending the same class, "SUMAPI educates us about our rights. That's especially important for girls who don't have good employers. They need to know what their rights are, and we can explain it to them." Samonte is a SUMAPI member.

In areas where SUMAPI operates, both kasambahay and employers are more aware of kasambahay rights, and they are sympathetic to the idea that they should receive an education to improve their lives. This new way of thinking represents the strong impact the programme has had and will continue to have on both beneficiaries and stakeholders.

4.3 Progress on education

Educational opportunities for kasambahay are increasing. Religious of Mary Immaculate is providing classes for about 600 students, and the Catholic Church is providing education at Sunday Schools in Mindanao, where 80 per cent of the students are domestic labourers. Classes for kasambahay are taught at Batangas National High School, St. Bridget College and the University of Batangas in Batangas City. In Quezon City, regulations require employers to give child domestic labourers the opportunity for education, and the public school system is providing classes.

By bringing the Department of Education, law enforcement, social workers and other service arms of the government on board, the mayor of Quezon City has raised awareness among his partners within the government infrastructure. The lobbying efforts by Visayan Forum played a role in educating the Mayor on these issues, and Visayan Forum now regards him as a partner. The Mayor's awareness and leadership reverberates among other government officials, and Visayan Forum can take some credit for the impact he is making.

Classes for kasambahay require great flexibility and awareness on the part of the teachers, due to the fact that domestic labourers are under strain from the dual workloads of education and employment. "You have to be innovative to have classes for them in the first place, and then to keep them in school," says Pacis. Alternative learning systems are relatively new phenomena in the Philippines. The increasing numbers of kasambahay taking these classes are another key outcome. These young women now have higher aspirations than being domestic servants, and they are gaining the potential to fulfil those aspirations. And, an increasing pool of better educated people is a positive for society as a whole.

4.4 Milestone in the fight against abuse

Visayan Forum's shelters, halfway houses and anti-trafficking projects at the ports have also had positive outcomes. Hundreds of young women have been rescued during the past decade; with guidance and assistance from Visayan Forum, some of the abused kasambahay have filed court cases against employers. This is a milestone that sends a strong message to society. Previously, employers would threaten kasambahay who complained about abuse by bringing police to the home and filing charges against them, usually claiming they had stolen something. Now the situation is being reversed. This process, along with Visayan Forum's partnerships with law enforcement, is also raising awareness among the police about abuse and employer tactics. There is a long way to go, but progress is being made.

Vignette 2: The courage to fight back

When the recruiter came to Rosalita Sanchez's village in Lloco Sur, Rosalita was enchanted by her tales of the big city. The stranger offered the 16-year-old a job as a domestic labourer for a family in Manila, a place she had only dreamed about. The salary, 1,700 pesos a month, was more than her mother, a tenant farmer, could make. With that kind of money, Rosalita (not her real name) could help her family. Her mother opposed the idea. No one knew this recruiter. But while her mother was working the fields, Rosalita gathered her belongings and began the journey.

Her new employers greeted her warmly. A family of five with a large house in Manila, the father and mother worked while their two teenage daughters and college-aged son were often at home. It didn't take long for the situation to turn ugly. At the end of the month, Rosalita never saw her salary. The employer said he would keep it for her. Then the abuse began. While the parents were at work, their children would invite friends over for drinking parties. Rosalita says they would force her to drink with them. Then they would hold her down, strip off her clothes and sexually abuse her while recording it all on a video camera. After three months, Rosalita ran away. But she knew no one in Manila, and a barangay official saw her wandering the street and forcibly returned her to her employer, whose children beat her black and blue. A few days later, she ran away again. A neighbour contacted Visayan Forum, whose members came to rescue her.

When Rosalita saw the high, fortress-like walls of the safe house, she began to scream and struggle. "I thought it was a prison,'' she says. Her tantrums and silences were frequent, but with intensive counselling over the next few months she slowly began to trust the people at Visayan Forum. The Forum arranged a tearful reunion with her mother in Manila, but urged her to stay at the safe house. Rosalita still needed counselling – and she was now enrolled in high school. "My dream is to learn how to use a computer and work as a secretary for a big company," she says.

Rosalita no longer resembles the scared and angry young girl who was brought to the shelter that first day. Now, she smiles and laughs easily and is friendly to visitors, never betraying a hint of what she has been through. She appears to be a happy young woman.

Her ordeal, however, isn't completely over. With the advice and help of Visayan Forum she has filed a court case against her former employers. She is filled with nervousness and anger when she sees the family in the courtroom. She had hoped she would never have to see them again. But she says she will continue to confront them in court. "I have to do this," Rosalita says. "Otherwise, they will do this again to other girls. Someone has to stop them from hurting more girls."

4.5 Partners in monitoring and evaluation

Visayan Forum holds a partners' meeting once a month to monitor and evaluate progress on its programmes and lobbying efforts. These meetings are used to find out what's working, and what aspects of programmes need to be adjusted. It also helps plan and decide changes in strategies as far as reaching kasambahay and on the lobbying efforts. The ILO, which funded the Time Bound Program during the past two years, also conducted monitoring and evaluation of such work and will share the results with the Forum.

5 Future direction

5.1 Building blocks of sustainability

By tackling the issue on several fronts, and forming a wide range of partnerships, Visayan Forum believes their work is sustainable. "We are creating building blocks," Oebanda states. "We want to institutionalize the sector, make it part of the police framework." The fact that the Magna Carta for Kasambahay has yet to be passed is only a mild discouragement for the Forum and SUMAPI. If more local government units pass their own ordinances and legislation, they will also serve as building blocks. With enough of these in place, getting national legislation passed will be easier.

5.2 Ensuring future efforts

As time progresses, Visayan Forum also expects SUMAPI to stand on its own. With membership growing and its leaders gaining experience, the capacity of the organization to operate on its own is growing, and at some point formal ties to the Forum should no longer be necessary. A strong and growing SUMAPI will also be a crucial force in the sustainability of efforts to keep the issue of kasambahay on the national agenda for development. To help increase and expand, SUMAPI should have the human resources to replicate the programme and its successes in more parts of the country.

It is the partnerships, however, that truly make these efforts sustainable. One of the most solid and sustainable partnerships is between Visayan Forum and the Catholic Church. With orders such as Religious of Mary Immaculate focusing on domestic labourers, and the church in Batangas donating space in its compound for SUMAPI headquarters, there is little doubt that this partnership is built to last. As churches exist in most communities, the church can also be a dominant vehicle in scaling up. Unlike politicians, whose priorities shift with changing times and demands, the church is committed to helping those in need by its very nature. And with its deep penetration and influence over the Philippines' society, it is an extremely powerful ally.

Visayan Forum's close work with local governments, such as Quezon City, Batangas City and administrations in the six other regions where it operates, is as close as you can get to guaranteeing that the effort to uplift kasambahay will go on. Even if the mayors change, which is inevitable, the dual endeavours of introducing education programmes with the Department of Education, and training social workers and law enforcement, have already raised awareness and institutionalized efforts to better the lives of kasambahay.

At a lower, local level, Visayan Forum's work with barangay councils, and especially the BBK child watch networks, is rooting the idea in communities that domestic labourers must be cared for, respected and protected. "If someone is not treating their kasambahay well, we will speak to them. We don't want that happening in our community," states Angie Fernandez, a BBK member in the Santa Ana district of Manila. These efforts are important because if the attitudes of communities towards kasambahay are not positive, protective or nurturing, then laws won't be observed or enforced.

Visayan Forum also employs positive reinforcement. It is running a Model Employer Campaign in which it gives out awards to some of the best employers, recognizing those who treat their kasambahay well and help them improve their stations in life. These employers provide positive role models for others.

5.3 Setting legal precedents

The legal cases brought on behalf of abused kasambahay also contribute to sustainability. With each judgment against an employer – whether it is for abusing their domestic labourer or failing to pay or abide by employment agreements – legal precedents are being set that will make future cases easier to win, and send a strong signal to employers that they can be punished for wrongdoing and the law will protect domestic labourers.

5.4 International links – Sharing achievements

Visayan Forum has established links to international campaigns against slavery and trafficking and for domestic labourers, including the Global March Against Child Labor. These links add to the sustainability by internationally raising awareness of the situation in the Philippines, increasing support for the programme, and by exposing Forum workers to news, ideas and strategies used by others. It also allows Visayan Forum to share its successes and lessons learned with those working on similar issues in other countries. Visayan Forum has also documented the kasambahay situation and its programmatic efforts in several books, brochures, reports and on its website.[16]

All of Visayan Forum's partnerships are ongoing and the intention is to continue working with one another. The ILO continues to support and join Visayan Forum in advocating for the enactment of the Magna Carta on domestic work. The passage of the Bill takes precedence in Visayan Forum's crusade to alleviate the plight of domestic workers.

Visyan Forum Outreach Coordinator Virgilio Montano believes the situation is improving because of all the efforts, and there will come a time when the Forum will no longer need to work on the issue of kasambahay. When that does happen, he says, the Forum and those working for it will simply turn their attention to another group in need. With the track record they have established with their partners, this avenue has great potential.

5.5 Policy implications

The main policy implication that the Forum is trying to achieve is the passage of the Magna Carta. They are optimistic that it will eventually happen. Local legislation is helping, and will continue to push for it in other localities. Furthermore, this year Philippines' President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo designated an annual Domestic Laborers Day[17] in which the contributions of kasambahay to the economy, households and families of the country were recognized and celebrated. This provides a strong underpinning for future lobbying for policy and legislation.

5.6 Lessons learned for replication

The most important lessons other countries can learn from Visayan Forum are perseverance and partnerships. The Forum's work on the issue for over ten years has produced gains that a two-year or five-year effort would never have achieved. It has coped with frequent changes of governments, which has meant restarting lobbying efforts each time. Nonetheless, they have persevered and the kasambahay are the better for it.

The broad-based approach of Visayan Forum is a key strategy that could serve others well, particularly working with religious or spiritual organizations and governments at national and local levels. This is a strategy that has recently begun to be used by groups working on HIV and AIDS in South-East Asia. They involve Buddhist monks and community leaders in their efforts to raise awareness, and to end stigma and discrimination towards people living with HIV and AIDS.

Lastly, setting up an organization to represent and deal with the problems of the target group, as Visayan Forum has done with SUMAPI, is a valuable strategy. It builds capacity and sustainability, and allows the group in question to eventually take over the efforts for themselves, freeing Visayan Forum to move on to other issues in need of attention.

When Visayan Forum began its work on the kasambahay issue, it had little experience in many of the areas it needed to work on. It had very little practical knowledge about strategies and approaches that would work. The past decade has seen achievements, but it has also been a learning experience. Other organizations and activists in the beginning stages of their campaigns would do well to learn from their lessons.

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PART II

REACHING MARGINALIZED GIRLS

CHINA – GANSU

Reaching ethnic minority girls with quality education

Contents

1 Context

1.1 Overview

China has the largest primary school system in the world, educating 122 million pupils in about 460,000 primary schools as of 2002.[1] The overall educational progress in China in recent years has been impressive, with reported national net enrolment rates (NER) in 2001 standing at 99.1 per cent for the 6- to 11-years age cohort in primary education and more than 88.7 per cent of the 12- to 15-years age cohort in junior secondary schools. Of the primary graduates, 94.4 per cent reportedly went on to middle school.[2]

While representing a success story on the whole, these figures mask disparities in basic education development across regions and between socio-economic levels. There exists a disparity in the access to education for economically advanced urban regions versus the more underdeveloped rural regions. Many poor, sparsely populated and remote areas, like Gansu, are still far from achieving primary enrolment and quality education targets. Schooling in poor areas is marked by low enrolment rates, high drop-out rates, and lack of equity for girls and minorities. According to a World Bank study in 2003, the gross enrolment rate (GER) of minority children was 20 per cent lower then the national mean.[3]

Located in the northwest of China, east of Qinghai and north of Shaanxi, Gansu province is home to 26 million people. While 92 per cent are Han Chinese, there are also significant numbers of Dongxiang, Hui, Boan, Tibetan, Sala, and Tu ethnic minorities. Chinese scholars trace these groups to the descendents of Central Asian *Wigur* peoples – who came to inhabit the Silk Road when Mongol soldiers and their conscripts settled in Gansu during the 13th century.

Many of these inhabitants, particularly those who live in remote semi-mountainous areas of Gansu Province, are home to the poorest of China's poor. People there face harsh living conditions, as regular droughts cause a shortage of water for both irrigation and domestic uses. Much of the mountainous land is arid and cannot be cultivated; finally, the land which is arable is low yielding and farmers have neither the financial resources nor the know-how to utilize irrigation technology.

1.2 Education

Given China's decentralization policies in education financing, a province like Gansu, with low revenue, is doomed to have an under-funded education system. Overall, schools in impoverished counties in Gansu are old and crumbling, there is a scarcity of trained and/or qualified teachers, enrolment rates are low and children's drop-out rates are particularly high. This situation is especially true in the four target counties where the Gansu Basic Education Project (GBEP) was implemented. These four communities are comprised of some 900,000 people and 110,000 primary school-aged children.

Table 1: Populations and incomes in four target counties (2001)[4]

County	Population	Per cent of minority population	Average rural per capita income (Yuan)	Per cent of population below poverty line
Dongxiang	250,000	80 (Dongxiang)	706	28
Hezheng	186,000	48 (Hui)	872	17
Jishishan	218,000	50 (Baoan)	752	26
Kangle	229,000	55 (Hui)	885	9

Most children attend only the basic primary school, dropping out after sixth grade. Despite China's nine-year compulsory education policy, many children in Gansu face challenges in enrolling and staying in school beyond the first six years. A baseline survey conducted prior to the GBEP found that in 1999 the average NER for primary school in Gansu was only 79 per cent. For girls, that number was a mere 60 per cent. Reasons behind the low enrolment rate include poverty, community and religious attitudes that downplay the importance of girls' education, poor school infrastructure, long distance to schools, and a curriculum that is not relevant to the children and local communities. A needs assessment survey conducted at the inception of the GBEP in 1999 found the state of the education system in the four project counties to be very poor, and characterized by a passive administration, a dearth of material resources, poorly trained and unmotivated teachers, and curricula which not only fell below international standards but also were not relevant to children's lives. On top of that, education was a significant material burden for poor farmers, as the cost of schooling could be as high as 25 per cent of the average household's disposable income (see Table 2 below).

Table 2: Annual operating expenses per student in rural primary schools, by county[5]

	Kangle	Hezheng	Dongxiang	Jishishan	Average
Cost per student (Yuan)	257	246	428	270	**327**
Per cent of total household expenditures	16.4	13.4	10.5	12.1	**12.2**
Per cent of household net income	35.2	21.7	17.8	31.5	**24.9**

1.3 Factors to overcome

According to the authors of the 2003 GBEP report – entitled Reducing the Financial Burden on Poor Households[6] – households appeared to bear between a quarter and a third of the operating costs of primary education. In addition to school fees, textbooks, uniforms and travel expenses, the family also incurs an opportunity cost when a child goes to school because that child is not able to help in the household or on the farm. Thus, convincing the parents to send their children, and especially girls, to school was not an easy task for the project.

The following are additional factors causing low enrolment rates in primary school and lack of equity in education for girls, minorities and disabled children.

- **Poverty:** The main economic activity in the four target counties in Gansu is sustainable agriculture, which produces little disposable cash. As ethnic minority people often have more than one child, if they can afford education it is usually only for one child and most likely a boy.
- **Economic prioritization of boys:** Because of the poor economic situation, girls are usually the last to have an opportunity to attend schools, with priority going to their brothers. Poor families see the need to prioritize how they spend their income and often the boy is favoured because it is perceived that his education will yield higher material returns for the family. Because an investment in girls' education is seen as "wasted" when the girl is married, the priority for a girl to receive an education often falls below many rudimentary household staples, and even semi-luxury items like television sets.
- **Environment and safety:** All project counties are situated on a high plateau in mountainous or semi-mountainous terrain, making distances between home and school often difficult to traverse. Parents are often hesitant to send their daughters to school because of those long distances and other potential dangers and inconveniences related to bad weather, poor roads and potential vulnerability to harassment on their way to school.
- **Gender insensitive traditions:** The four provinces covered by GBEP in Gansu are predominantly inhabited by Muslim populations. Traditionally, girls' involvement in school (both in terms of attendance and participation during classes) was barred due to customary practices which restrict women from taking part in public affairs. Further, according to these religious attitudes in some Islamic communities, education can even make the girl a less desirable bride, because it can "spoil" the girl, in terms of her religious devotion and obedience to traditional customs.[7]

- **Lack of social pressure:** Before the project started, very few people were sending their daughters to primary schools. There was no social pressure to push those families to educate their girls. Once the project started and some families started to send their children to school, the rest of the community faced pressure to do the same thing. This "crowding in" effect was a powerful motivator for non-participating people to follow the rest of the community.
- **Poor quality of education:** Schools and teaching points consistently lacked qualified teachers; 20 per cent were classified as unqualified, untrained and temporary. The main reason for the lack of qualified teachers was the remoteness and harsh living conditions in some of the villages in Gansu. Even bright and capable teachers from Gansu who chose to remain in their communities had no means to further their skills and knowledge because trainings were not available. Female teachers are needed in these schools to facilitate a better communication with girls, provide role models for girls and ensure parents that girls are being taken care of by female teachers. In general, parents in this region are not very enthusiastic about sending their daughters to male-dominated schools.
- **Irrelevant teaching methodologies:** Most teaching methods used in primary schools in Gansu were lecture-dominated, outdated and simplistic, leaving students disengaged from both teachers and learning materials. Curricula lacked relevance to the specific social milieu and economic realities of the communities.

1.4 Government policy

Another important aspect of the overall poor quality of education, low enrolment rates and lack of equity in schools in Gansu Province was related to the government policy in education. Funds for education in China are decentralized, so poorer provinces have poor education systems. In addition, China's centralized curriculum and rigid organizational education structure produced a top-down flow of information and orders, and did not encourage bottom-up innovative approaches. This made school management very passive. Head teachers, who otherwise could play a key role in turning a school into an active locus of learning, simply waited for orders from the county bureaus, which in turn waited for provincial decrees. This system disempowered local-level educators, and made the systems less responsive and relevant to the needs of local communities.

Only recently has this system been slightly liberalized, giving more potential power and latitude to the provinces, and from there also to the counties. It was this liberalization that the GBEP sought to benefit from, given the immense opportunity to make education more appropriate, relevant, and responsive to the needs of communities. Further, the Chinese Government's consistent commitment to Education for All (EFA) goals is a positive force for change. The government's support of EFA legitimates the GBEP and provides another set of incentives for parents to send their children to school.

2 Project description

2.1 Overview

The Gansu Basic Education Project was designed as a unique new way to address the goals of EFA and Universal Basic Education (UBE) in China. As a six-year pilot project, GBEP was implemented from 1999 to 2006, and focused on increasing of enrolment rates of students in poor areas, with a particular focus on marginalized populations, including the very poor, girls and special-needs children. The United Kingdom's DFID provided funding and contributed to the design, monitoring, and evaluation aspects of the project. DFID engaged Cambridge Education China (CEC) as consultants to take part in the planning and designing of the project, as well as providing technical assistance to educators and administrators. The project itself was managed by the Gansu Provincial Education Department in Linxia Hui Autonomous Prefecture. Other key stakeholders included head teachers, community and religious leaders, teachers, and provincial and county-level administrators.

2.2 Objectives

The overarching goal of the GBEP was to increase enrolment and thereby to contribute to achieving UBE. To reach these goals, the project sought to achieve the following objectives:

- To improve the quality of education by producing new materials, innovative curriculum design and supporting materials;
- To improve and ensure access to and equity of education by providing financial support to poor and marginalized children, especially girls;
- To ensure quality and impact of education by training teachers and building capacity for administrators;
- To ensure relevance of education as well as ownership and participation by the community by engaging communities in School Development Planning (SDP).

Specific activities included: teacher training, access strategies, civil works, school location planning, inspection, head teacher training, supplementary readers, social development, monitoring and evaluation, early years' education and special education needs.

2.3 Beneficiaries

The main target groups in this project were primary students and teachers. Indirect beneficiaries were parents and other community members. An especially important target group was female teachers who were specifically targeted for employment and training. Special measures were taken to involve female community members in SDP through the use of quotas and targeted training. All areas of the project were approached with a gender equity perspective. To ensure that this important goal of equity was carried out with greatest attention, the project created a special task force of social development consultants, the Social Development Support Group, to monitor and support this initiative.

2.4 Innovations

As a pilot project, the GBEP introduced many innovative ideas. The common denominator of all these innovations can be summed up with one word: participation. From teaching methods to the creation of curricula, many different voices were incorporated. The framework established by the CEC consultants for the GBEP allowed for all stakeholders to have a voice in the process, completely reorienting a "top-down" system by creating responsive participatory institutions. The evaluation team found many cases of educators taking the personal initiative to get the community involved – thus, the truly innovative part of the project was how it established a system that fostered innovation.

3 Process

3.1 Overview

As a pilot project, the GBEP set out to test new approaches to the educational problems described above, and later to disseminate successful practices in other poor areas of rural China. School Development Planning and Participatory Approaches to Teaching are the two key components of GBEP which are especially worth mentioning, as they were the most innovative and contributed to making this project a good practice.

3.2 School Development Planning

"The aim of School Development Planning is to encourage the school to work closely with its community to solve its problems and promote its development (e.g. to improve access for poor children or to raise achievement levels)."[8]

SDP has been enacted in 672 schools. It is innovative participatory method designed to engage communities in the development of their schools; a GBEP review team closely examined the process in 12 schools in 2003 for impact.[9]

The SDP cycle began with training of School District Directors and head teachers. The training included at least two sessions and most of the time three. Head teachers then introduced SDP to their colleagues, using different strategies – some through meetings with the whole staff, while others met with key teachers, who in turn disseminated the information to their staff. In schools, an SDP Committee was formed, with the head teacher filling the role of Chairperson and the community leader acting as Deputy. These community leaders acted as gatekeepers to the communities themselves and organized meetings to inform the villagers about the new processes. At these initial meetings, permanent members of the SDP Committee were recruited; each of the 12 schools now have committees involving seven to nine permanent members.

After the committees were formed, they approached the community members to elicit feedback and contributions to school development. The first round of these meetings – and indeed all meetings since their inception – have been well attended, sometimes attracting over 200 participants. At the meeting, the community ranked the problems facing the schools, prioritized them, and then drafted the SDP document. This document was used in structuring the curriculum and, to some extent, allocating fungible resources.

SDP took a non-hierarchical approach to education development by facilitating a "conversation" with all relevant stakeholders, who in turn cooperated to construct community-appropriate educational solutions. SDP reoriented the relationship between the school and the county (the funding tier of local government). Where originally information flowed only top down, under SDP information flowed in both directions. It was not simply a reorientation from "top-down" to "bottom-up" approaches, but rather an opening up of channels of communication and information flow. For example, a particularly-energized head teacher at Xingxi School in Hezheng town sent ideas he had developed with his community group to the county Project Management Office (PMO) and received a policy change that integrated his suggestion. This kind of system succeeds in giving schools more involvement in their own development. Moreover, when communities see concrete results that emanated out of discussions they have held, this encourages them to be more involved in contributing to the school development process. Ms. Kang Zi Hua, a farmer and community member of Taizijie town says, "I am so proud of the school; it has the best reputation in the area. Everyone joins the meetings to help."

Thus, through this project administrators and head teachers worked together with teachers, community members and even students in designing certain aspects of the programme. Empowered educators – particularly head teachers – in turn energized their communities about the importance of education.

3.3 Participatory approaches to teaching

The GBEP trained teachers to focus specifically on child-based teaching methods, moving the teaching model away from simple information dissemination and memorization. This aspect of the project was initially met with scepticism and even opposition by many teachers: The new teaching styles were not only foreign, they were much more labour intensive for the teachers. Instead of reading facts, and encouraging memorization, teachers were compelled to take a child-centred approach to teaching, focusing on individual needs and finding creative ways to get students excited about learning.

While most teachers were excited about the new ways of teaching, many were also unhappy about the extra load of preparation work and difficulties in classroom management. The project succeeded in engaging teachers into the new teaching methodology by introducing participatory approaches during intensive training sessions, where new teaching styles and materials were developed by local educators through CEC technical assistance. Teachers were encouraged to work together to come up with solutions, and many teachers described how much closer they became with their colleagues. The teachers saw the benefits their students received from the new teaching methods. Further, many teachers pointed out that while the new methods do take more time to prepare, they are also more effective as students learn more and are more engaged in classrooms.

3.4 Other components of GBEP

There were 12 other interrelated project components:

- A Special Education Needs (SEN) component taught teachers how to both address the specific sets of needs of children with physical or mental impairments, and also how to integrate special-needs students into a typical classroom.
- Head Teacher Training – seven modules were delivered to head teachers to build both teaching and administrative capacity.
- A new inspection system based on ensuring impact of schools' own SDP by evaluating student and teacher learning.
- Budget reform – the counties increased total education spending and spending on quality inputs.
- Early Years' Education component focused special attention on teachers of grades 1 and 2.
- A Civil Works programme improved the appearance (in terms of child friendliness), as well as the quality and durability, of school buildings.
- Development of remedial Supplementary Readers to help with language acquisition
- Development of access strategies to help get more children to attend and remain in schools (a feeding programme, posting female teachers in remote schools, community outreach, scholarships, etc).
- School location planning was employed to ensure more efficient and appropriate siting of new schools.
- Support was provided in the form of consulting to improve county education planning capacity.
- A research programme focused on action research, which allowed practitioners themselves to become involved in research.
- Monitoring and evaluation component measured inputs, outputs, outcomes and impact of the project.

3.5 Timeline

The project was implemented in phases: first a needs assessment, then direct financial support, followed by training of teachers and eventually SDP. In 1999, the needs assessment was conducted to address the varying capacities of the target communities – from school material needs, to teaching capabilities, to current enrolment rates (with a focus on girls' attendance).

Between 2000 and 2001, the main activities were focused on infrastructure development and enrolment – from refurbishing old schools and building new ones to ensuring access by providing scholarships for needy children, particularly girls. This addressed the problem of low enrolment rates and succeeded in pulling many children into schools.

In 2001, the project began training teachers. This vastly improved the quality of education, making the time spent in school more worthwhile for students, and helping parents realize that the investment in education was a valuable one. The CEC consultants worked closely with the Government's relevant administrators to explain the expected outcomes of the new type of teaching methodologies.

In late 2001 and into 2002 the project began implementing SDP. This component addressed the need for relevant education, and for communities to take on the project and "own" it. The CEC consultants worked closely with teachers and administrators, as well as community and religious leaders. Many separate meetings were held, stakeholder dialogue was initiated, and consensus was built on the needs of the community and how educational support could help address them.

Monitoring and supervision was conducted periodically by DFID and CEC, to measure performance against indicators, ensure transparency and accountability, as well as to guarantee maximum impact. A mid-term evaluation by a DFID review team took place in 2003 with a final evaluation in 2006.

3.6 Monitoring and evaluation

Extensive monitoring was done throughout the project. In fact, stakeholders told the evaluation team that one innovative aspect of the project was that it was constantly evolving as the communities grew, their needs changed and lessons were being learned. This is a direct result of rigorous monitoring and evaluation.

There were many reviews conducted on this project, by this project. Some of those include:

- An Independent Review of Project Management of the GBEP
- Reducing the Burden on the Poor: Household Costs of Basic Education in Gansu, China
- Mid-term Evaluation
- An Independent Review of the Learning Environment of the GBEP
- An Independent Review of SDP in Gansu
- End of Project Evaluation

The reviews examined the successes and failures of the project, and also conducted extensive research on the target communities to ensure the activities were targeted and appropriate. The Independent Review of School Development Planning[10] recognized head teachers as a key stakeholder, and identified their commitment as perhaps the central factor separating low and high impact of SDP on community attitudes and child learning. The Reducing the Burden on the Poor GBEP report[11] focused on the real costs of education, and pointed out the debilitating debt that many families took on without access to affordable credit, and before GBEP scholarships made attendance more affordable.

4 Outcomes

4.1 Highlights

The following highlights the outcomes of the GBEP:

- The primary objective of increasing enrolment rates to reach the EFA goals was nearly achieved. The initial goal was for the enrolment rate in the target communities to increase from 79 per cent to 92 per cent. According to the End of Project Evaluation (EOPE) surveys, by May 2005 the primary NER had increased to 91 per cent, just 1 per cent below the intended target. All four counties have either achieved or come very close to achieving the target objectives.
- The NER for girls in Dongxiang increased by 26 per cent in six years. Hezheng has seen an increase of 18 per cent, Jishishan 23 per cent and Kangle County 17 per cent.
- The drop-out rate has fallen in each county to between 0.6 per cent and 3.12 per cent, and the completion rate exceeded the project goal of 75 per cent as approximately 90 per cent of students in the four counties remained in school until the end of 6th grade. Finally, not only did students remain in school through the primary cycle, but approximately 87 per cent enrolled in middle school, exceeding the target of 70 per cent (see Table 3).

Table 3: Drop-out rate, primary completion rate, middle school continuance rate, by county[12]

Drop-out rate (%)		Kangle	Hezheng	Dongxiang	Jishishan
Grade I	EOPE Survey	0.18	1.42	2.36	1.40
	Baseline	5.00	17.00	32.00	5.00
	Decrease	4.82	15.58	29.64	3.60
Primary School Completion Rate (%)		93	93	87	87
Per cent Primary Entering Middle School		91	91	83	83

- Minority girls' gross enrolment rate increased by 20 per cent in the first two years of the project.
- Texts and supplementary readers were changed and made more sensitive to gender and disability.
- Scholarships were provided, with a focus on minority girls; a special programme of boarding subsidies at middle schools was made available exclusively to girls.
- Design and refurbishment of educational buildings and facilities have considered girls' needs (e.g. toilets and play areas).
- All teachers were provided with equity training, and female head teachers were provided with special training and study visits.
- Through the use of quotas and special training more women were involved in SDP and had their voice heard in community meetings.

In the primary school in Zhong Zhuang Township, enrolment went from 175 to 300 in the last ten years. Enrolment of girls increased from 57 in 1996 to 139 last year.

Table 4: Enrolment for Zhong Zhuang primary school, Zhong Zhuang Township[13]

Year	No. of students in school	No. of minority students in school	No. of minority girls in school	No. of girls in school
1996	175	118	58	67
1998	NA	NA	NA	NA
1999	223	152	NA	81
2000	253	178	86	120
2001	225	146	48	84
2002	251	180	59	99
2003	281	209	85	125
2004	301	218	90	131
2005	300	232	107	139

The improvement, presented above in raw data, can be expressed through percentages as well, to take into consideration population growth experienced by the village. In 1996 the minority enrolment rate was 85 per cent and it increased to 97.2 per cent in 2005. In 1996 the girls enrolment rate was 83 per cent. It went up to 97 per cent in 2005. Minority girls enjoyed the most statistically significant increase, going from 80 per cent enrolment in 1996 to 96.4 per cent at the close of the project in 2005.

4.2 Impacts

The outcomes of increased enrolment were matched by improvement of quality and greater participation of teachers and community members in education issues. Teachers expressed how they benefited by changing their attitudes from being educators to becoming community activists; they felt empowered to energetically outreach to villages to encourage girls' families and communities at large to send girls to school. The child-friendly learning environment (with games and interactive teaching methods) drew children to the school, helped them learn and attracted them to keep coming back and not drop out. The impact of this project is far reaching: girls, their parents, schools, and communities, as well as other regions of China are benefiting from lessons learned.

4.2.1 Increased confidence in girls

Head teachers and other teachers expressed "increased confidence among girls" as one of the most important and least expected impacts of the project. An unexpected outcome from this increase in confidence, according to many teachers, was the increase in retention rates; a girl with more confidence in herself and her school work will be more likely to fight to stay in school and demonstrate to her parents that school is worthwhile. Anecdotal evidence has displayed that girls – especially those with increased confidence – can exert power over their families and convince parents to keep them in school.

Vignette 1: Students and teachers change community attitudes

Mrs. Mu Xiu Fang, 38 years old, an eight-year veteran teacher at Zhong Zhuang School, admits she was hesitant about the GBEP project at its inception. "It was very difficult for me to accept and learn the new model," she says, adding that the project seemed unreasonable, too ambitious, and too much of a break from what students, teachers, and communities were used to. "But with training on the new teaching methods we learned from the consultants, I gradually accepted it, and I realized how beneficial it could be." Today, Mrs. Mu is an example of an empowered teacher who is making an impact on girls' education in her community.

Over the years, Mrs. Mu overcame her scepticism towards the project and became an enthusiastic participant in the GBEP. As a result of changing her attitudes, her role and contribution to education of minority girls in her town has altered as well. Not only did the project bolster enrolment across the board, and particularly for ethnic minority girls, it has also empowered many people in the community to be agents for social change.

Mrs. Mu tells us the story of Xiu Lin, an 11-year-old girl who wanted desperately to go to school, but her father would not allow it. Day after day, Xiu Lin would cry and cry, until the family finally broke down and brought her to school to explain to the teachers that there was just not enough money to afford the costs of schooling. In that moment, Mrs. Mu saw a new and powerful role for herself in the community, and she took on the responsibility of enrolling more girls by informing and educating their parents about the benefits of education.

Together, the little girl and teacher, both women, enacted powerful social pressure on the father – a traditional farmer and a staunch Muslim. Ma Xiu Lin wanted to be in school because all of her friends were there, adding yet another factor – the crowding-in effect of increasing enrolment rates – to compel the family to change its mind. Mrs. Mu points out the irony of this situation: "The girls themselves hold more power than I thought. Ma Xiu Lin wanted to be with her friends; she saw it as natural that girls go to school. I supported Ma Xiu Lin and helped convince the family. I realized that I had power too." Xiu Lin is now happily studying at school.

Mu identifies that moment as a personally inspiring one in her life. She reconceived her own role vis-à-vis the community, and now describes how her teaching responsibilities extend beyond the school gates. She now outreaches to the communities, explaining the benefits to both little girls and their families, and persuades families to give education a try. She also believes that the success of the project has given her ample material to make these outreach visits most effective. "People in Zhong Zhuang know me and trust me because I come from this community and I am a Muslim myself. Because I struggled with this project and then saw its benefits, it is easier for the people to do so as well. They know I mean well and speak with experience when I advise them to send their daughters to school."

4.2.2 Changes in the school-county relationship

SDP made schools more assertive and self-reliant, and more willing to collaborate and advocate with the county-level government. What was previously a passive relationship has become symbiotic and active. As a result of this project, teachers gained understanding and confidence in their role as agents of change, and energetically sought to contribute their input to the local, county, and sometimes even provincial policy makers. Administrators, on the other hand, also changed their attitudes and became more involved with school activities. They relinquished control and granted more autonomy and freedom to schools to design their own specific educational techniques. Administrators told the survey team that this was because the change in perception allowed them to see the benefit of getting local level input specific to the communities involved.

4.2.3 Changes in the school-community relationship

The SDP brought schools and communities closer together, as evidenced by community participation in SDP meetings, and confirmed in the evaluation teams' interviews with community members and teachers. Community members in many different villages, in processes facilitated by educators, have provided supplemental labour and financial support to the school. This kind of contribution demonstrates real commitment by the community and shows how deeply they have been impacted.

4.2.4 Changes in the teacher-pupil relationship

The teachers largely attributed the improved teacher-pupil relationship to the child-centred teaching methodologies that the teachers learned in the Participatory Approach trainings. "The relationship between teacher and student is now more equal," says Ms. Bai Wen Fang a teacher at Taizijie Primary School.

The child-centred approaches are currently in the process of being institutionalized and being effectively embedded in schools' teachings. This is one prime example of the project's sustainability, as, even without continued funding, teachers have expressed commitment to maintaining these methodologies. Teachers have developed their own support systems to help make the challenging aspect of the interactive teaching less of a burden. "We all get together to share ideas. It makes coming up with ideas easier, and it is fun to work together," says Ms. Bai.

5 Analysis

5.1 Getting communities to understand the importance of equity

As mentioned above, major development challenges – religion, tradition and economic reality – made community attitudes about girls' education difficult to change. The focus on minority girls was initially unpopular, especially given that minority boys as well as non-minority boys and girls were often just as poor. The concept of equity proved difficult for communities to understand.

However, training in sensitization to equity principles helped to slowly raise awareness of the importance and legitimacy of focusing on the most marginalized. "Of course not all [students] can go on to university, some will have to or will want to go back to their homes and work on the farm. But one who was before 'only' a mother will now be an educated mother. And she will have an impact on her children, both in terms of her general knowledge but also in the emphasis she puts on education," says Mr. Deng, a PMO staff in charge of SDP in Hexheng County. That school administrators can so eloquently defend girls' right to attend school, and that they can provide specific examples and a long-term vision, implies that they are not simply thinking that they must send girls to school because it is a necessity of the GBEP project; rather the administrators know why education is important and can articulate it powerfully. The prevalence of this knowledge and attitude is critical when members of the GBEP are approached by members of the community who assert that girls' education is a wasted resource.

Vignette 2: Muslim community takes pride in school

Mr. Ma Xiyuan welcomes us into his home with a booming smile, and points at his walls. A great tapestry of Mecca adorns one, a mosque the other. "Allah," he points out. In many ways, Ma Xiyuan is a typical Taizijie community member. Aged 70 years, a devout Muslim, he has lived most of his life in this village, where almost everyone is a farmer and a Muslim, just like him. And like many of the other elder people in the village, Mr. Ma has children and grandchildren who went to the primary school that abuts his house. In other ways, however, he is not a typical community member: As a government official, he worked in education during most of his career and sent all three of his children to university.

In this way he has a unique perspective on educational programmes, and he speaks with great enthusiasm about the GBEP. "Before the project came, the enrolment rate was around 70 to 80 per cent, but now it is not just higher – it is complete. Everyone in the community, even the people without school-aged children, is proud of the school. This is the number one primary school in the county! The community contributes to the school development and participates in school meetings and events. Our voices are heard and appreciated."

According to Mr. Ma, the community engagement was one of the most innovative and important aspects of the project. Without community, the project would fail because the relationships between schools and parents before the project were poor and full of mistrust. Parents didn't want to send their children to school because they were not convinced about their children's safety and learning environment. Since the school is located near the road, children were always at risk of being injured in car accidents. But now, teachers take extra care of kids, and escort them home or provide transportation. "Parents of girls are especially happy that the environment of schools is so much safer and pleasant. That is the reason the enrolment rates went up so much."

Moreover, the school holds periodic student performances, as well as religious events and community meetings. Mr. Ma implies that school for girls and Islamic teachings are compatible, especially when the school is a social space in which the villagers feel comfortable. "The school is not just a school, it is a social, religious and cultural centre where we can meet and discuss our issues and plan for the future."

5.2 Getting communities to participate in the project

The evaluation team found instances where the initial attempts at SDP were met with resistance. A local head teacher, Mr. He Long of Xingxi School in Hezheng says the following: "When we first began the project, at the village meeting we saw [the SDP] was not working…the community did not trust the school." Participatory approaches were revolutionary for a society very accustomed to receiving information from above. Not only did communities not trust the school to be the hinge-point of educational reform, they apparently did not trust themselves to be responsible either.

The project addressed this problem by holding outreach sessions with various smaller focus groups, developing action plans, building community confidence, and slowly integrating the groups together. As the project progressed, and the communities witnessed the improved benefit of education now that some decision-making was in the hands of the schools, they too began to contribute and work more closely together.

5.3 Getting teachers to invest in the project

Every teacher told the evaluation team that the project has resulted in more work for them. Teachers expressed initial reticence and scepticism, due to the fact that participatory teaching methods were foreign to both the educators and the students. Bai Wen Fang and Bai Xiao Hong, who have been teaching at Taizijie Primary School for four and 12 years respectively, spoke to the review team about the challenges of the new approach: "The new approach is good for small size classroom and for the young children, but when we first heard about it we thought, 'That is so difficult for older students, and what about a classroom with many students – how can we manage?'"

However, teachers were enrolled into the project by attending training courses, participating in project supervision missions, and listening to lectures. Further, once teachers observed the benefit that children were receiving, they began to see the hard work as effective. "The new approach makes the students learn faster and have more fun," says Ms. Bai Xiao Hong. Not only were the children happier, but they were learning more as well.

5.4 Getting families to reprioritize education

That which constitutes a family being 'too poor to afford to send girls to school' is effectively up to the individual family to decide. The issue often breaks down to prioritization of resources, and some families consider girls' education less of priority then buying a TV, for example. One of the main challenges was convincing families that girls' education was more important than previously evaluated and an expense they could afford.

Scholarships were an important part of the convincing strategy, as they were an effective "foot in the door" technique. Once the girls went to school and started to demonstrate the effects of their education to their parents, many families changed their initially negative attitudes. Many stakeholders interviewed by the evaluation team claimed that even without financial support "most" or "many" will now continue to send their girls to school.

Empowered teachers and educators played a role in this process as well: They took ownership of the programme, and did extensive outreach to initially unwilling families.

Finally, the community itself often provided pressure. When sending girls to school became the norm, it proved much more difficult for singular families to hold out, especially in small villages where most community members knew one another. The key was thus to reach this point, and all the strategies above contributed to this end.

5.5 Successful innovations

Besides participatory teaching methods and SDP, already expanded upon above, there were further innovations in the GBEP:

- Scholarship distribution: CEC designed a unique methodology weighting factors of gender and ethnicity. As a result, more than 70 per cent of scholarships went to girls.
- Classroom design: Hexagonal desks were placed in classrooms. This impelled teachers to use new methods of reaching children, because the spatial organization made traditional lecturing ineffective.
- "Happy Campus": Colourful murals with positive messages were painted on the walls, as empirical evidence from many situations has demonstrated that school appearance matters.[14] These colourful spaces gave girls a friendlier and more welcoming place to play.
- Curricula relevance: New books and readers for classes were developed with stories about local people, including girls and minorities. Children were able to better identify with the teaching material.

6 Future direction

6.1 Sustainability

In many ways, the GBEP was an experiment in the potential of sustainability. The project provided initial financial assistance to thousands of girls so as to give families a chance to witness first hand the positive effects of education. The GBEP coupled scholarships with trainings and capacity building to administrators, teachers, and even community members – skills that do not require continued funding for them to remain active and maintain an impact. These skills, moreover, made education more meaningful, more valuable, and thus more worthy of investment. The CEC consulting team included domestic experts in education and gender. Also, many local experts were involved so knowledge was transferred. Now people have more power to do something about the existing problems. They now have skills and tools to deal with absent students and special-needs children.

Educators will find their new skills buttressed by financial support, as the project succeeded in one of the most vital aspects of sustainability: getting government support. On 24 March 2006, the four target counties agreed to increase funding to education, effectively taking on where the GBEP finished. This extension of funding was made possible by increased funding from the central government, but also from the success of the GBEP at convincing local administrators of its efficacy.

The project will still need to be sustained without the oversight of CEC, who provided the training and capacity building. It will be up to the government and the engaged stakeholders to train new staff and community members. In this sense, it remains to be seen how sustainable the project is. And yet, as development projects go, the tracks are laid for successful long-term outcomes, as multi-lateral support from an organization like DFID is not feasible in the long run.

6.2 Replicability

The DFID project will be extended in the next three years and it will cover 35 to 40 counties in Gansu from 2006 to 2009. The four original counties are included, but at a low financial support level just so they can share experiences. The new project will not be as intensive, and will only include three or four of the original components. DFID will only give one third of the original funds as seed funds to get this started. SDP and Participatory Teaching trainings will remain seminal to the expansion implementation.

There are plans to build on research studies in order to help change policy to make it more favourable to rural girls, and to disseminate the experiences of girls' education on a national and international stage.

To that end, CEC is now implementing another DFID project. The South-West Basic Education project (covering Sichuan, Yunnan, Guizhou and Guangxi) will involve funds of 50 to 60 million pounds to 27 counties and will include both the SDP component and gender equity.

Endnotes

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CHINA – GUANGXI

Providing vocational education for ethnic minority girls

Contents

1 Context

1.1 Overview

In the last decade and a half, China has experienced tremendous economic growth and development. The education sector has seen significant progress thanks to the government's consistent commitment to nine-year compulsory education, the EFA initiative and the MDGs. The enrolment rate at primary schools in China reached 99.1 per cent in 2000, up nearly three percentage points from 1990, and the enrolment rate of lower secondary education stood at 88.6 per cent in 2000.[1] Gender disparity in enrolment rates has also been decreasing. Furthermore, the government's focus on developing, rural and poor regions has delivered improvements in school infrastructure, teacher trainings and general quality of education.

Despite the gains at the national level, there are regions in China that have been lagging behind the rest of the nation in terms of quality and equity of education. Such regions usually encompass poor, rural districts with ethnic minority populations. Guangxi, located in the south of China between Yunnan and Guangdong Provinces and bordering Viet Nam, contains ethnic minority peoples living predominantly in remote, semi-mountainous, and very poor rural areas. Otherwise known as Zhuang Autonomous Province, Guangxi is home to over 30 ethnic minority groups, with the Zhuang minority being the largest. As the Zhuang people have their own language and distinct culture, many do not speak Mandarin and are not well integrated into society or into the modern economy. Most ethnic minorities in Guangxi work on the land, practicing traditional animal husbandry and subsistence farming.

1.2 Local development factors to overcome

Before the project started, basic education enrolment rates in 1999 in Guangxi stood at 98 per cent.[2] These figures however did not include the enrolment rates of ethnic minority populations and girls, who had more difficulties in access to education than did boy or non-minority children. Ethnic minority girls not only rated low on enrolment, but also had the highest drop-out rates, and lowest completion rates. Currently, the drop-out rate among girls at lower secondary schools in Guangxi is 5.26 per cent, the highest in all of China. Most girls from ethnic minority groups finish only primary school (grade 6) and do not continue to lower secondary level, otherwise referred to as junior high or middle school.

There are four main reasons behind the challenges in equity of education for girls and disadvantaged ethnic minority populations: i) poverty; ii) traditional attitudes; iii) lack of infrastructure, and iv) lack of job prospects.

1.2.1 Poverty

Most farmers in the remote Guangxi areas are poor and few can afford to send their children to junior high schools. The costs of tuition, transportation and other fees are usually too high, especially for families with more than one child.

1.2.2 Traditional attitudes

"Many ethnic minority families have more than one child. Even though the One Child Policy in China was not relaxed for ethnic minorities and Chinese living in rural areas until 2002, it was generally not enforced. Therefore, if minority parents had more than one child, but not enough money to educate all of them, they would tend to give preferential treatment to boys. The rationale was that girls are considered to be less worthy of education because they will marry and leave their families to live with their husbands. Further, because traditionally women work on farms or at low skilled jobs, education is seen as irrelevant. Attitudes about customary female roles are difficult to change, as they are often the backbone of culture and customs.

1.2.3 Lack of infrastructure

The lack of appropriate school infrastructure in remote areas and long distances to junior high schools make it almost impossible for children and particularly girls to continue education beyond the first six grades. Ethnic minorities often live in remote mountainous areas, where junior high schools are not accessible and there is a lack of boarding facilities. Parents are reluctant to send girls to far away towns or cities, as they are worried about their safety and well-being.

1.2.4 Irrelevant curriculum

Finally, even if families can afford to pay for tuition fees, do not discriminate against their daughters, and do not live too far away from schools, many girls do not enrol or finish school because they don't find the curriculum relevant to their interests and needs. The curriculum in a typical junior high school does not include any vocational training and/or technical skills-building modules in conjunction with its general academic curriculum. Thus, a student has to attend high school in order to learn practical and occupational skills. As very few ethnic girls continue their education up to high school, most of these girls are left with only basic skills and limited employment opportunities.

1.3 National policy on vocational training

Since 1986, China has endorsed nine-year compulsory education across the country. Illiteracy in the young and mid-aged population has fallen from over 80 per cent down to 5 per cent. The nine-year compulsory education law[3] has allowed the Chinese government to train some 60 million mid- or high-level professionals and nearly 400 million labourers.

In order to allow more young people to complete the nine-year compulsory education, the government issued a new educational policy in 2005 to decrease the costs of attending junior high schools. While it is still too soon to assess the impact of the policy, the expectation is that enrolment rates in secondary schools will increase as a result of the policy. The government is open to curriculum reform at the secondary level in some selected provinces and to extending it elsewhere across the nation. The particular reform related to the UNESCO Guangxi Vocational Education Project will allow the introduction and integration of vocational education to junior high school curricula. Initially the change will be introduced only at the county or provincial level as pilots with an aim to eventually scale-up nationally.

These reforms in education are linked to the Chinese Government's multi-sectoral approach to economic development of the Western Regions. The Government of China has been implementing a policy since 2000 to promote economic growth and improve social welfare in the remote Western Regions. Under this policy, called "Development Strategies of the Western Regions," education is perceived as a key condition to success and is highly supported by the Government.

This policy to focus on education as a part of the Western Region development plan, coupled with a greater degree of decentralization, provides an enabling environment for changes to occur and an introduction of vocational education into the junior high school curriculum. The Guangxi Provincial Education Bureau considers this policy change as evolving from the positive outcomes of the UNESCO project.

2 Project description

2.1 Overview

The Vocational Education Program for Ethnic Minority Girls was implemented in five middle schools across five counties in the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region: Tiandong, Bama, Rongshui, Yizhou, and Ping Xiang.[4] The project started as a pilot from 1998 to 2001 and its first and second phase were implemented from 2002 to 2005. The project closed in February 2005 and received positive reviews from independent evaluators who deemed the project's outcomes as "highly satisfactory".

2.2 Objectives

The project's overarching development goals were to contribute to the further expansion of nine-year basic compulsory education through improving quality of and access to relevant education for minority girls. In addition, the project aimed to improve the economic development of the Western Region by providing relevant vocational education.

The four specific objectives of the project were to:

- **Improve enrolment and equity:** 200 ethnic minority girls will have successfully completed middle school education with practical vocational skills and knowledge acquisition.
- **Improve quality of education:** Teachers will have been trained in new child-centred teaching methods and will have increased their knowledge and skills for teaching ethnic minority students.
- **Improve management and build capacity:** Local capabilities will have improved in managing educational programmes for ethnic minority population.
- **Conduct research and share lessons learned:** Research results will have been widely disseminated for policy recommendation formulation on measures to improve and sustain quality and relevant education for ethnic minority girls.

2.3 Beneficiaries

There were three direct beneficiaries of this project. The first, largest and most important group included 200 ethnic minority girls between the ages of 13 to 18 years, who received scholarships to continue their studies in five junior high schools in Guangxi Province. These scholarships provided vocational skills training and room and board. In addition, the project also benefited approximately 200 teachers and educational project staff. The project supported training for teachers in vocational education subjects, educational psychology, guidance and counselling, and other relevant skills. The last group to benefit included 40 administrators: school principals and administrative staff, local bureau officials and provincial-level educational bureau staffs. This group received training in managing specially tailored basic educational programmes for minority girls, as well as educational research and monitoring and evaluation techniques.

The indirect beneficiaries of this project included the girls' families and communities whose quality of life was expected to improve as the girls shared with them the knowledge, skills and opportunities they learned.

2.4 Funding

From 1998 to 2001, an initial pilot project was funded by a Japanese NGO, the Nomura Center for Lifelong Integrated Education. The first and second phases of the project were implemented from 2001 to 2005. Additional funding was provided by Japanese Funds-in-Trust for Capacity Building for Human Resources. All funding was channelled through UNESCO.

3 Process

3.1 Overview

From 1998 to 2001, the project launched a three-year scholarship programme in Guangxi Zhuang Minority Autonomous Region with the goal of attaining Lifelong Integrated Education.[5] UNESCO worked closely with the National Commission of the People's Republic of China for UNESCO and the Education Commission of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region to implement a vocational middle school programme in Guangxi. One hundred minority girls in three middle schools were given scholarships to continue their schooling; at the same time, they received technical and vocational training. The new learning process therefore became more relevant to the minority girls' needs and living environment.

In September 2001, the second phase of the project was launched to follow up, further consolidate, and expand the programme for another three years. Under the second phase, not only were more scholarships provided to ethnic minority girls, the project also introduced key elements for sustainability. The project focused on and emphasized capacity building and the increase of local capabilities for research and management of the educational programmes for minority girls. The capacity of the project schools was strengthened through the organization of an annual refresher course for teachers who were directly managing the programme. Trainings on educational research methods, programme monitoring and evaluation were also organized for local education programme managers.

During the second phase, the project also compiled information and data from the five project schools over three years, identified key elements for improving the opportunity, the quality, and the relevance of education for minority girls, and put forward policy recommendations for minority girls' education through research results dissemination throughout the country.

3.2 Specific activities

Project components included scholarships, vocational training and practice, training workshops for teachers and administrators, research, and job placement and follow-up activities.

Two hundred ethnic minority girls in five counties (40 girls per county) received a scholarship of US$300 each per year to cover school registration fees, textbooks, boarding fees, school meals, school activity fees, daily living expenses and any other recurring costs. The scholarships were disbursed in non-monetary form; the girls were provided with accommodation, food, travelling expenses and textbooks, rather than with cash.

Two hundred teachers from the five project schools received 15 to 20 days of training each year. The training was given during school holidays and organized in cooperation with the Guangxi Education Commission, the county education bureaus and Guangxi Normal University. Trainings covered educational theories, curriculum development methods and vocational skills. Trainings were conducted in various modalities, consisting of seminars, lectures by experts, multi-media technology, and learning in classroom and group discussions.

Forty education officers and administrators from the local education bureaus of the five project counties also received a one-week training once a year. The training covered background and trends of modern management, analysis of school education in the 21st century, the theory of modern management and application in the practice, project administration, monitoring and evaluation, as well as inspections. Administrators were given an opportunity to exchange their knowledge and experiences with colleagues from other counties.

The last activity included compiling research and experiential writings based on the project implementation. Information and data on the middle school vocational training programme were collected and compiled from the five pilot schools. With support and supervision from the Guangxi Education Commission, the Guangxi Normal University produced a book with collections of research papers from teachers, and articles from the students. The book also included basic information about the project, as well as studies on adolescent education and psychological consultation for minority girls.

3.3 Project implementation

The project initially started as a pilot from 1998 till 2001. During the pilot, 100 girls from three counties, aged between 13 and 18 years, received scholarships to attend junior high school. Given the positive outcome of the pilot project, UNESCO decided to expand the project and enrol more girls into vocational junior high schools. Thus, the first phase of the main project started in 2001 and it engaged 200 girls from five counties in Guangxi Province. The second phase covered two more years of schooling for the girls and provided additional practical education. The project management and guidance was channelled from the provincial to the local education level. Training was done at the provincial level in Naning. There was an open communication between the provincial and local-level Education Bureau. The local officials gained knowledge and experience through this collaboration.

Selection of girls was very meticulous and involved a number of stakeholders. To begin with, the village chiefs nominated the girls. The nominations were reviewed by a committee, which included the local Education Bureau, the Poverty Alleviation Bureau, the Women's Federation, and other school officials. The main targets were ethnic minorities, children with either one or both parents deceased, and under-privileged girls. After the girls were selected, the committee would provide support to the school in problem solving and monitoring the girls' progress.

The curriculum was developed according to the needs of girls. The design process involved participation of the local Education Bureau officials, schools, communities, parents and girls. To ensure sustainability and its impact to community, an initiative from the project involved setting up demonstration sites at girls' houses. The sites not only provided the girls with direct benefit and income generation, but also made them a model for other community members to aspire to. For example in Ping Xiang, a pigeon house was built at one girl's house and the project also donated 30 pairs of pigeons for the girl to keep and tend to.

3.4 Main partners and stakeholders

The following organizations were involved as partners in this project: UNESCO, Guangxi Education Commission, county-level education bureaus, Guangxi Normal University, the Poverty Alleviation Office and the Women's Federation. UNESCO, together with Guangxi Education Commission, formed the programme management unit and provided overall administrative and technical support to the county-level implementing bodies of the Education Bureau. The Guangxi Education Commission coordinated the training and research activities and ensured regular consultations with UNESCO and other technical advisors. The Commission also conducted monitoring and supervision of the programme and provided progress reports to UNESCO. The county education bureaus in five counties, as project administrators, were responsible for monitoring and supervising the project together with the Commission. The bureaus worked closely with the project schools that acted as implementation units. Students, parents and communities were also important stakeholders as the project sought their participation in monitoring meetings and during evaluations. Project counties formed sub-project teams at the county level, headed by the Deputy Mayor of the county. These teams also consisted of representatives from the Education, Finance, and Agriculture Departments, as well as the Women's Federation and project schools. Finally, the research component was administered and facilitated by the Education College of Guangxi Normal University.

4 Outcomes

4.1 Highlights

All the achieved outcomes were in line with initial set objectives. The rate of completion under this project was 100 per cent as all 200 girls graduated from three years of junior high school. Also the principle of equity in education was applied and successfully promoted in this project. Second, quality of education and teaching improved significantly as well as a result of the trainings provided to teachers. Third, management and administrative capacity was built at the local level. Fourth, lessons learned were collected, documented and widely disseminated to facilitate replicable components of the project and scaling-up efforts. Finally, an unexpected outcome included initiation of policy change to redesign the curriculum at the junior high school level.

The outcomes were beyond expectation because not only did the ethnic minority girls attend schools, but the attitudes of their parents, communities and teachers were also altered as a result of the project. The impact of the project has been widely spread and it affected all involved stakeholders – from girls, teachers, and school administrators, through education bureau officials, the Poverty Alleviation Office and Women Federation to parents, families and entire communities.

4.2 Participating girls

Two hundred girls received vocational and academic training during the three years of school. In terms of vocational education, the girls gained the following knowledge and skills: agricultural knowledge and practice in farming, vegetable planting, animal husbandry; hospitality skills which will allow the girls to work in hotels and restaurants; tailoring; language skills including Mandarin, Vietnamese and Thai; and other practical skills. In addition, the girls received academic training in accordance with the national curriculum for junior high school. They have learned basic life skills, such as communication and negotiation, and the project facilitated future planning and counselling for these girls to support their choice of either entering the workforce or continuing education.

It can be safely stated that the biggest impact of the project was the improved livelihood of the girls and their improved economic opportunities in the future. Those girls who stayed in their towns or nearby cities are able to find jobs and earn better living than they were ever able to make before they joined the project. Although it is difficult to measure the impact on the girls who migrated out of the county, anecdotal stories indicate that thanks to the education gained through the project, these girls have better earnings, more opportunities, and are more able to navigate in an environment far from home. In Ping Xiang, interviewed students all said that the project had a tremendous positive impact on their lives. They also mentioned that their friends and peers expressed interest to take part in a project like this.

4.3 Families and communities

The project improved the economic condition of the girls' families by providing scholarships for the girls as well as vocational opportunities. Because the girls received financial support from the project, their families could save money for other important causes such as sending another child to school. For example, a single mother in Ping Xiang was able to send her two daughters to school, the older through the project and the younger with the savings she gained by not having to pay for schooling, food or board for the older daughter. Families benefited also when girls found jobs and were able to send some savings back home. In Ping Xiang County, where the poverty level is high and migration is a common trend, many girls leave their towns to work in factories in another province. The girls become the source of income when they find jobs post graduation.

The other impact on girls' families and communities is the change of attitudes that occurred as a result of their participation in the project. Most parents, who previously were not aware of the importance or consequences of girls not going to school, are now very proud of their children. They now want to have similar opportunities for their other children, both boys and girls. Parents who previously thought that girls should stay home and work on the farm are now advocates of education and work opportunities for these girls. Obviously this change of attitudes cannot be attributed solely to the project as many other factors have changed in the local economy, given the increase in migration and technology in the last few years. Yet the project had the most direct impact on them as it engaged their participation and advocated openly for greater equity of education for their daughters.

4.4 Quality of education

Quality of education was significantly improved during the project period through training of teachers and a revised custom-made curriculum. Two hundred teachers in five junior high schools were trained in relevant vocational curricula, teaching management skills, counselling techniques and general teaching methods. Specifically, teachers received new concepts about curriculum development, teaching methodologies, educational and teaching theories for working with ethnic minorities and girls, computer skills, educational psychology, professional guidance, psychological consultation and vocational trainings.

As a result of awareness rising, many teachers in the five junior high schools changed their attitudes towards ethnic minority girls and became champions for equity in education and opportunities for these girls to find viable employment after graduation. Having studied curriculum design and knowing well the situation of their female students' situations, the teachers played an important role in changing the curriculum and tailoring it towards both the needs of their students and opportunities available in the job market. Consequently, new curricula for vocational education in junior high school were created using participatory and bottom-up approaches.

Many teachers interviewed in the Ping Xiang Vocational School said that they were never before able to convey their lessons with such confidence and knowledge. Now, teachers are much more inquisitive and interested in learning about their students' lives because they can contribute by developing more appropriate curricula for them. For example, the Ping Xiang Vocational School has made a full use of its location near the Vietnamese border and designed a curriculum heavily focused on Vietnamese language. The head teacher travels often to Hanoi to arrange study exchanges with Hanoi schools as many students from Ping Xiang end up going to Viet Nam after graduation.

Vignette 1: "We are like a family"

Ms. Xuyuejing has been working at the Ping Xiang Vocational Secondary School for exactly 20 years. She started in 1986 when the school first opened and for many years she has taught political science.

She was involved in the project since its inception in 1998. During the pilot phase of the project, Ms. Xuyuejing was teaching the girls political science, ethics, and hospitality vocational skills. In the second phase of the project, she was promoted to be the head teacher responsible for the 30 girls in the project. Under the project she took on the responsibility of looking after the girls, providing counselling and guiding their education and career development.

"The girls are really special to me," Ms. Xuyuejing says, almost with tears in her eyes. "I remember when they first came to the school. They were so shy, socially inept and so unaccustomed to city life. They didn't even want to talk to me at first. Now they've turned out to be so social and so friendly. When they see me on the streets they come up to me and give me a big hug. We are like a family and they often call me their second mother."

It wasn't easy for Ms. Xuyuejing to transform the girls and help them overcome their shyness. Two effective strategies used in this project to improve social skills were a communication course and civic volunteer activities. In the communication course, the girls studied how to improve their Mandarin skills and how to communicate with people on the street in the city and with potential employers and clients in their future careers. The civic volunteer activities included working on community projects, helping older people, volunteering in hospitals, and organizing and participating in ethnic festivals in the city.

"Sometimes I think that I benefited even more then the girls from this project. First, I got training on how to teach vocational education, such as hospitality, working in hotels and communications. Second, I learned how to be a better guidance counsellor for young girls. One of my girls that I'm most proud of is Nong Qing Qiao, who came to the school not knowing what she wanted to be. I spent a lot of time talking with her and guiding her. She decided to pursue further education and now is studying in high school. She aspires to go to university and study law. I feel so lucky to be able to contribute to her future this way."

4.5 School administrators and local bureau officials

Capacity for education management and administration was built through training of education officers and managers in the five counties participating in the project. Forty administrators and managers received training on management and administration of schools, including planning, budgeting and assessment. In addition, local education bureau officials and school officials learned about education-sector project cycle management, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. For many, this was the first time for them to work on an international development project and the opportunity to interact with outside consultants and take part in design, monitoring and evaluation sessions provided them a platform to learn international best practices in development.

As a result of the training in management and administration as well as from the consultations with international consultants, school administrators and local bureau officials recognized the need to change curricula for junior high schools and saw themselves as agents of policy change. Now, they are more familiar with and experienced in the implementation and management of an international programme. They are able to conduct monitoring of the project activities and actively participate in evaluations. They are comfortable in conducting participatory meetings with communities and engaging various stakeholders in design and implementation of the project. Furthermore, they are well trained in management and administration of schools. This hopefully will translate into improved internal efficiency of the schools and lead to higher completion rates, lower drop-out rates and higher quality education. As interviews in Ping Xiang show, school administrators have full ownership of the project and are eager to replicate the project or bring in another project to their county. This speaks to significant impact of this project on institutional development and capacity building.

4.6 County governments and local education bureaus

The impact on local government and education bureaus is extensive and involves policy changes and curriculum reforms. As stated by a Deputy Director of the Ping Xiang Education Bureau, the project provided a "gateway for policy change" through the introduction of vocational curriculum to junior high school. During the project implementation it became obvious to the education officials how important it is to include vocational education into the junior high school curriculum so that students who cannot go to high school can still gain vocational skills. Currently, local officials are preparing policy suggestions to be presented to the Provincial Education Commission. The project came at the right time – when the government was introducing greater degrees of decentralization. In addition, the current programme to support economic development in Western Regions provides a favourable environment for the introduction of vocational education into basic curriculum of lower secondary school.

4.7 Project team of Guangxi Normal University and UNESCO

The management team, which was comprised of UNESCO staff and a project team from Guangxi Normal University, gained overall understanding and appreciation of managing a project in vocational education. The Guangxi Normal University team played an important role in supporting the research component. As a result of their involvement in this project, the researchers and educators gained appreciation for education of ethnic minority girls as well as vocational education.

4.8 Collection of lessons learned

Lessons learned were collected and widely disseminated through publication of a research report titled "Listen to the Voice of a Flower Opening". All students, teachers and administrators from the five junior high schools participated in this project by writing down their experiences and lessons learned. The book contains writings on participants' experiences from project implementation, project documentations, girls' writings on hopes and dreams for the future, and discussions of challenges and recommendations for future implementations of a similar project. As a result of this publication, the schools and community feel that they now have an institutional memory and documented capacity which will guide them in future projects.

4.9 Big picture benefits

Given China's fast growth and shift in the economy from agricultural to industrial production and services, the private sector stands to benefit from trained and qualified labourers. As factories in the coastal regions grow and small businesses start and boom in other areas, the demand for skilled labour is increasing at a fast rate. Vocational education is thus important for poverty reduction and economic growth.

5. Analysis

5.1 Operational challenges and risks

While all objectives were achieved according to and beyond initial expectations, there were a number of operational and structural difficulties encountered during the implementation period, which affected the success of the project and its long-term sustainability.

Among the operational difficulties were delays with project. As mentioned before, the project faced difficulties in obtaining funding beyond its first year of implementation. This resulted in UNESCO having to issue a proposal for additional funding; delays in implementation necessitated shifts in school resources. The project team worked collectively and collaboratively to overcome this challenge and funding was obtained to continue the project.

Another difficulty was the capacity of the girls entering the project. Because the girls previously studied in poor schools, their capabilities were much lower than their peers in school. The girls lagged behind not only in academic subjects but also in basic life skills such as communication and social skills. Each school quickly found solutions to this problem by organizing communication courses and civic activities. In the communication courses, girls learned Mandarin and how to communicate with different people in the city, in shops, on the street, and in service industries – where many of them will end up working. The civic activities involved volunteering in hospitals and nursing homes. As a result of these activities, girls became more accustomed to working in various environments and with different people. They also gained confidence and self-satisfaction from contributing to society.

The design of the curriculum for junior high school presented one of the most significant structural challenges for the project. Project and school administrators struggled with how to incorporate vocational education into the normal academic curriculum of junior high school. While the project objectives called for provision of vocational education to ethnic minority girls so that they could pursue employment after they graduated, it was important for the project to ensure that the girls gained appropriate academic knowledge so that they could continue to high school should they wish to do so. One of the lessons learned from the project was that schools need to balance the curriculum by providing both vocational and academic training. School officials worried that the girls who decided to go to high school would have difficulties passing the entrance exam. Thus, the selection of courses was altered for these girls. As a result of these challenges, it was suggested that the project be extended to four years so that the girls can finish regular academic curriculum while also receiving vocational trainings and practices. This, however, was not possible due to lack of funding.

Another challenge, which emerged after the project was completed, concerned the future careers of the girls. Under the original objectives of the project, it was intended that girls would gain vocational education and return to work in their villages, helping their parents to farm and raise animals. However, at the end of the project, very limited numbers of girls went back to their villages. In the project site in Ping Xiang for example, out of the 40 girls who finished vocational junior high school, only two went back to their villages; two went on to continue education at a high school level; and ten settled in the city of Ping Xiang and found work there. The rest migrated either to Nanning, the capital of Guangxi, or even further to other provinces on the coast to find jobs in factories. While the original project design did not foresee migration to be an outcome, the project nonetheless facilitated migration by equipping the girls with vocational and social skills, which are useful for factory jobs and city environments.

One of the lessons learned was that the curriculum should be tailored even more specifically to the needs of the girls and also to the current realities and demands of the market. The vocational skills learned by the girls proved to be too basic and in some cases did not facilitate obtaining viable employment post graduation. The main reason for that was because the duration of their vocational training was too short, as two out of the three years of the project were spent on academic study. Thus, some girls found difficulties finding a job in the local city after graduation so they ended up migrating away to other provinces. Since the ultimate goal of the project was to improve the quality of lives for ethnic minority girls, life-skills education and assistance in finding better employment should be made more relevant in future projects.

5.2 Innovative outcomes

- **Tailor-made curriculum focused on vocational education while still incorporating some aspects of academic learning:** Therefore the teaching and learning process was made more relevant to the minority girls' needs and future job opportunities. Teachers, students and parents were involved in designing appropriate and effective curricula for the vocational education of the ethnic minority girls. This bottom-up curriculum design approach is unique and innovative in Guangxi, as it allows community participation and contribution, as well as instigating results-based learning. The ratio of vocational education to academic courses was arranged at 30 per cent and 70 per cent. The five project schools set up special vocational courses according to local cultures and the local rural economy development level. They also took into account the girls' psychological and physical characteristics. Project schools have also developed local textbooks. For instance, Ping Xiang Junior High Vocational School offered courses in agricultural farming, animal husbandry, tailoring, Vietnamese language, computing, cooking, tourism, and hotel hospitality services. The Bama Middle Vocational School offered 'Planting and Breeding Practical Skills'.[6] In addition, academic courses encompassed traditional and native knowledge; for example the chemistry teacher in Ping Xiang introduced elementary principles of making alcohol, based on native customs and local ingredients.
- **Research activities and the publication of a book with lessons learned from the project implementation experience:** Over 70 project teachers in five project schools submitted more than 100 papers and essays on their ideas from the programme implementation. Forty academic research papers on girls' attitude changes were completed and recommendations were made about how to design and provide suitable courses for ethnic minority girls. The book was disseminated widely among educational practitioners and policy-makers concerned with the education of minority children.

Vignette 2: A girl becomes a recognized businesswoman

Li Hua is 21 years old and comes from a village located 20 kilometres from Ping Xiang. Her family is one of the poorest in the village. Her mother is deceased and her father is disabled and cannot walk. Because of her father' s disability, Li Hua is the only income provider in her family.

Before the project started, Li Hua was working odd jobs in the village, and helping other people with their farming, planting and housework. She had no opportunities to find a stable and decently paying job. "I was so happy when the school committee came to my village to interview me three years ago for the vocational school in Ping Xiang," she says. "I was very grateful to be selected for the scholarship and I knew that I wanted to study animal raising and farming in order to find work in the village and support my family. After my mother died, it was always my dream to support my family, and now with the education I got from the vocational school I am able to do that."

The UNESCO project built a pigeon demonstration unit in Li Hua's house. She also received 30 pairs of pigeons to raise and keep. After one year of taking care of the pigeons, she now has 60 pairs. Normally pigeons live and die in pairs so they have to be kept and sold together. Li Hua sells on average 22 pairs of pigeons per month to restaurants and receives 25 Yuan per pair. This grants her an income of between 200 and 400 Yuan per month. In addition, Li Hua works at night in a massage parlour in the city where she earns a further 300 Yuan a month. While this is a relatively low amount compared with other families who can carry out more laborious farming, it is enough for the modest requirements of Li Hua's family. "Without the project's support, my daughter couldn't finish junior high school and find a job," Li Hua's father says. "Now she can make a living raising pigeons."

People in the village have begun to recognize Li Hua as a young businesswoman. During the project, many girls from school would come to learn from Li Hua about her pigeon raising, and then practise the skills they learned in the classroom. Now neighbours and friends come to see the pigeon house to observe how Li Hua is taking care of them. They admire both her knowledge about animal raising and her business skills. "It is very important for me to have a good image in the village," Li Hua says. "Since we are so poor, many people look down on my family and take pity. I don't like that. I want to show them that I am strong and capable to support my family. Now with the education I received, I feel empowered to do that."

- **Potential for broad policy change and reform of a curriculum to allow introduction of vocational education in lower secondary schools:** The project provided a pilot case study that allowed the educational officials to experiment with curriculum change.
- **Introduction of demonstration units in girls' houses:** A number of girls had animal cages or sheds built (such as the pigeon aviary in Ping Xiang) or a greenhouse. As a result, they are now able to earn income from these, and their whole community can benefit by learning practices from the girls.

6 Future direction

6.1 Sustainability

While overall sustainability of the project poses some challenges, the recent government policy aimed at supporting the nine-year compulsory education provides some positive expectations. Presently, there is little likelihood for the project to be expanded due to lack of funding. The Japanese NGO which initially provided funding for the project has completed their term of support and UNESCO has thus far not secured other funding for the project. While the project has mobilized some resources from the local government and private companies to support more girls, the support is limited and will not suffice to start another project and provide scholarship to many girls. The only prospect for keeping sustainability is in pursuing support from the national government. Only last year, the Government of China issued a policy that called for lowering of tuition fees for lower secondary school (grades 7 to 9). This policy, together with the change of attitudes among ethnic minority communities towards girls' education will hopefully lead to more girls attending junior high vocational schools in the near future.

Additional factors supporting sustainability of the project objectives include capacity building achievements, particularly the training of teachers and administrators who will be able to pass on their knowledge and skills to more students. The Local Education Bureaus realized that their role can go beyond that of school supervisors and more involved in designing curricula relevant for their students, and managing and planning school budgets and resources.

6.2 Replicability

There are currently no plans for replication of the project in other counties or provinces. While the lessons learned and outcomes of the project are valuable and positive, there is no additional funding available to support the project at this time. One very important contribution to potential future replication of the project is the research book published by the project, and a documentary TV film produced by a local TV channel in Guangxi. In the book, teachers, students and other stakeholders explain their lessons learned and recommendations for future implementers of a similar project.

In addition to the research book, the various workshops organized during the project and led by the Guangxi University ensured that lessons were shared and many people learned about the project. The project also produced a video showing how girls benefited from this education.

Endnotes

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PHILIPPINES

Offering an Alternative Learning System for out-of-school youths and adults

Contents

1 Context

1.1 Overview

The incidence of relative poverty in the Philippines has been on the rise in recent years, according to the Asian Development Bank (ADB), which defines relative poverty as a "lack of access to a level of goods and services that are required for meaningful participation in society ... relative poverty provides the link to inequality and places emphasis on the ability to thrive as a human being and member of society." From 1985 through 2000, the percentage of families living in relative poverty has increased from 36 to 41 per cent.[1] "The Philippines exhibits a highly inequitable distribution of income," the ADB said in a 2005 report entitled "Poverty in the Philippines." According to government statistics from the year 2000, 46.9% of rural people were living below the poverty line, more than double the percentage for people living in cities.[2] In 2003, the richest 10 per cent of the population earned 53.4% of the national income, while the poorest 10 per cent earned only 4.7 per cent.[3] Even in terms of absolute poverty during the same interval, the ADB said that while there has been significant progress in reducing urban hardship, there has been virtually no change as far as the incidence of rural poverty.

1.2 Unequal development and relative poverty

In the central islands of the Philippines archipelago, such as Ticao in Masbate Province, statistics become stark reality. A collection of three major and 14 minor islands located in the centre of the archipelago, Masbate is a crossroads for migrants and a melting pot of languages and cultures. It is also deprived. Masbate was ranked by the government as the second poorest province in the Philippines in 2000, with 62.8 per cent of its people, or 209,851 families, living below the national poverty line of US$0.72 a day.[4]

It shouldn't be that way. The province boasts vast cattle ranches and fertile farmland where rice, copra, corn and other crops are plentiful. The surrounding waters of the Visayan Sea are bountiful with fish. Until recently, the province was the site of the country's largest gold mine and retains other mineral deposits. But only a few families own most of the land, while the vast majority of farmers are tenants. Corruption is rife, crippling development, according to locals. The roads between the province's 550 barangays are often an impassable rut of rocks and mud, even though money was allocated to pave many of them and they were officially reported as completed.

1.3 Lack of education

Education is a cornerstone service that is key to redressing relative poverty. Education gives people a greater ability to help themselves and the possibility of greater opportunities in the future. But education is lagging and lacking in the Philippines. Nationwide in 2004, there were 11.2 million out-of-school youths and that population was rapidly growing, according to the World Bank.[5] The provincial government reported that in Masbate only 75.2 per cent of the population is functionally literate.[6] "We've had a literacy problem here since time immemorial," says Dr. Ricardo Tejeresas, the Alternative Learning System (ALS) Regional Coordinator of the Department of Education (DepEd) in Masbate. The provincial government boasts a 95.7 per cent participation rate in public elementary schools, but only a 54 percent rate in public secondary schools. No statistics for graduates or completions are available. Neither is the unemployment rate, although the 'visible underemployment' rate is listed at 29.2 per cent.[7]

The consequences of a lack of education reverberate across many aspects of life, transcending employment and income. In interviews with uneducated locals in Masbate, many said they had little or no basic knowledge about health, nutrition and sanitation. Illiteracy, says Dr. Tejeresas, imbues people with a fatalistic attitude towards life, as they feel they don't have any power to change their circumstances.

1.4 Gender inequality

Another form of inequality which deepens poverty is gender inequality. In the Philippines, women are more likely to be unpaid household workers than salaried or self-employed workers, according to recent Labour Force Surveys conducted by the government's National Statistical Office. Government statistics show that girls usually receive slightly more education than boys because of pressures on boys to start becoming breadwinners earlier.[8] According to the Department of Education, in 2004, 62.2 per cent of girls enrolled in primary education completed their studies, while only 57.7 per cent of boys did. In secondary education, 63.7 per cent of girls were completers compared to 48.7 per cent of boys.[9]

Girls, however, are usually steered towards studying for professions that earn less money and have less power, such as nursing and garment making. Boys, meanwhile, are encouraged to study for jobs such as engineering. "Overall, girl children still suffer from cultural, gender-tracked and discriminatory practices," according to the Philippine NGO Beijing+ 10 Report.[10] Malnutrition and infection affect girls more than boys, the report says, citing UNICEF. Girls suffer more from economic exploitation and violence, and there is an increasing feminization of risk behaviours such as drug and alcohol abuse and sexual behaviours that could lead to HIV and AIDS. In 1998, the report said, four out five HIV and AIDS patients were women.[11]

Gender inequality is also ingrained in society's power. Despite two female presidents during the past 20 years – Corazon Aquino (1986-1992) and Gloria Macapagal Arroyo (2001-present) – most key political positions, even at local levels, go to men. The same is true in the boardroom. Business executives are usually men. Even if these men have had less schooling than women, they run against or work with. The result, at times, is the uneducated leading the educated.

1.5 Education for the excluded

Education targeted at the socially marginalized – particularly women – is therefore key to addressing poverty, inequality and spurring development. The government recognizes and addresses this fact. In President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's 10-Point Development Agenda,[12] one stated policy is "education for all through: construction of new school buildings and classrooms, provision of books and computers for students, scholarships to poor families." To increase the Philippines' competitiveness, the country must "mobilize and disseminate knowledge to upgrade our technologies and increase our people's productivity."

As part of this policy, the government is also committed to ALS[OU1]. In 2004, President Arroyo signed Executive Order 356 "Renaming The Bureau Of Nonformal Education To Bureau Of Alternative Learning System." That order reads, "it is a declared State policy, to protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality basic education and to promote the right of all citizens to quality basic education and such education accessible to all by providing all Filipino children in the elementary level and free education in the high school level. Such education shall also include alternative learning system for out-of school youth and adult learners."

Still much work is needed to make education available to all, especially for economically, socially and geographically disadvantaged children. The government allocated 135.4 billion pesos (US$2.8 billion) for education in 2004–2005,[13] its third-largest budget item. Nonetheless, the amount does not seem to be covering all the costs. According to local education officials, children are often charged a variety of fees by schools, fees that exacerbate inequality and result in exclusion of poor children. Items such as computer maintenance fees are often omitted in the government's budget. Schools end up charging students to use the computers to make up the cost. If students can't afford the fee, they are given an alternative subject to study, such as cooking. Some schools even charge students for test papers. The result is that poor students are stigmatized by poverty and denied opportunities to learn.

Furthermore, only 0.68 per cent of the education budget is spent on ALS,[14] and the figure has not increased in years. That leaves a gaping need for an untold number of Filipinos who are not in the school system but desire an education. Plan International's ALS programme was designed with the intention of redressing that shortfall.

2 Programme description

2.1 Alternative Learning Systems

Plan's ALS programme for out-of-school youths and adults is designed to give those who never had the opportunity to attend school, or who were unable to complete school, a second chance at education. The programme, which is done in partnership with the Department of Education, is divided into two components: a Basic Literacy Program and a Continuing Education Program. After completion of the latter, a learner may take the Accreditation and Equivalency examination to get an equivalent elementary or secondary school diploma.

The programme was launched in Masbate with the Department of Education in November 2003. At the time of writing, it was in its third year, and while one of its goals is to build the capacity of local government units so that they will eventually take it over, at the present time there is no set date for the project's completion. Limited to Masbate's main island, it now covers ten barangays[15] in three municipalities – Balud, Mandaon and Milagros – and provides education for roughly 250 students each year.

2.2 Objectives

The objective of the programme is to raise illiterate members of the community to a level of functional literacy, and to provide out-of-school youths and adults with primary and secondary school education. Those who have reached functional literacy are then eligible for the primary and secondary education components of the programme. The ultimate academic goal is to provide an opportunity for participants to receive an elementary or secondary school diploma by passing an equivalency test.

The programme has others goals, however, which are not strictly academic. These include imparting knowledge that will improve students' health, nutrition, business and income opportunities. As mentioned above, capacity building is also part of the project's agenda. By training instructional managers and mobilizing local government officials – from provincial to barangay levels – both communities and the education system are strengthened.

2.3 Beneficiaries

The main target groups of the project are youths aged 12 years and up, and adults who have either dropped out of the school system in their childhood or never had the opportunity to attend. The secondary beneficiaries are the Instructional Managers, the teachers who receive training and employment in the programme. The communities are indirect beneficiaries, as those who have attended the course come away with knowledge in areas such as health and sanitation that is useful not just to themselves but to the community as a whole. Another indirect beneficiary is the government. Local and the central governments benefit from the partnerships with Plan, delivering an essential service. Plan's main partners in the project are the barangay councils (particularly the Education Committees), the three municipalities, the Masbate Child Protection Council, and the Department of Education.

2.4 Innovation in education

Plan's ALS programme is innovative because it employs a child-centred, community development approach. In many developing countries, there is often a top-down approach to governance and services, including education. Curricula are often devised and mandated by the central government. In ALS, however, learners contribute to programme design by communicating what it is they want to learn. Learners either choose from a menu of options, or the programme will come up with lessons to cover subjects learners are requesting. They can also choose where and when they want to learn. A related innovation is the Individual Learning Agreement, a contract each learner signs that spells out their commitment to study and what subjects they will be taught. It is customized for each learner. That kind of flexibility and responsiveness is not common in many education programmes.

Plan and some of its partners also made innovative use of social mobilization. They lobbied and persuaded government officials from barangays to the provincial government. The strategy employed in enrolling the politicians was to partner with them and encourage governments to take credit for bringing the programme to the people. At least one district representative won an election in part by claiming he brought the ALS programme to his area.

2.5 Funding

Funding for the project comes from the municipalities' and barangays' youth budgets, the Department of Education's ALS budget and contributions from Plan. The Department of Education developed and provided copies of the modules and Plan helped reproduce them for learners. Dr. Cantre and his team were chiefly responsible for mobilizing resources from the various partners.

3 Process

3.1 Local government looks for partners

For years, Dr. Recoleto Cantre worked as the Deputy Division Education Supervisor in Masbate. He felt strongly that something must be done to deliver education to those who were out of school. When Dr. Cantre was promoted to Division Education Supervisor I-ALS, in July 2002, he immediately decided to try and fill this gap in education. The problem was funding: Earlier NFE programmes funded by development banks had already ended, and what the government was now budgeting for ALS was not sufficient. So he searched for partners. He lobbied local leaders, convincing some barangay captains (local community leaders) to set aside 10 per cent of their youth budgets for educating out-of-school youths. He found similar funding commitment from the mayor of Milagros Municipality. Still, it was not enough. So he contacted Plan.

Vignette 1: In charge to change lives

Dr. Recoleto C. Cantre could only sit and watch in frustration. As a School Principal in the Division of Masbate Province, a small group of underdeveloped islands in the centre of the Philippine archipelago, he didn't call the shots on the NFE in this area. The Education Supervisor for the Bureau of Non-Formal Education of Masbate did. And he wasn't interested in rocking the boat.

During the late 1990s, when the World Bank and ADB allocated millions of pesos for NFE projects for Filipinos, the Head of the Bureau of Non-formal Education of Masbate was not keen on it. With limited experience in implementing NFE programmes, he may have feared the project would fail and he would be blamed. And fail it did. Few students passed the equivalency test, and some service providers failed to comply with government requirements. As a result, about a million pesos had to be returned to the national government, funds that could have been used to help educate those who hadn't had a chance.

In July, 2001, the Education Supervisor retired. The man chosen to take his place was none other than Dr. Cantre. Now, he was in charge, and he was determined to start changing lives. "I have a personal commitment to help the poor and those in need," he says. It's a commitment instilled in him by his parents, themselves poor farmers on the island of Ticao in Masbate. That ethic led Dr. Cantre to leave the world of commerce some 30 years ago and enter the profession of teaching. "Even before I became a teacher, I believed I should use whatever skills and ideas I have to help others learn and improve themselves," he says.

To bring education to out-of-school youths and adults, however, Dr. Cantre had to employ skills not normally associated with teaching: advocacy, fund raising and social mobilization. He began by searching for partners (the World Bank and ADB programmes had already ended). Ultimately, he found Plan in 2001. But that was only part of the equation. He had to convince community leaders that this was worthwhile enough to set aside money from their own meagre budgets. Although not all local officials supported him, the majority did. Ten barangays are contributing part of their budgets to the project, with 14 more preparing to do the same.

Now the 57-year-old father of three has to find ways to take this project from its infancy to a full-fledged programme. It's a challenge, but one he's ready to accept because he believes it will bring about positive change for more people in Masbate. He's already made a difference in hundreds of lives. "I've had a lot of help in my life, from parents, teachers and others," he says. "It's only right that I should help others in return."

3.2 Experience makes for an ideal partnership

Plan had been working on community development projects in health, education and livelihoods in Masbate since 1999. It already had agreements with the Department of Education through the Philippines NGO Council on Population, Health and Welfare, a coalition of 86 NGOs, to provide ALS in six other provinces. Since 1998, Plan representatives reported that it has delivered ALS to 230,000 out-of-school youths and adults nationwide.[16] "We try to better the community and education is part of that. We try to identify the needs of the community as expressed by the communities themselves," says Rowena Campos, Plan's Country Program Advisor for Learning. Although Plan has technical specialists in education, they are not usually directly involved in the training of Instructional Managers (IM), or teachers; instead, Plan contracts service providers and coordinates programme delivery. In 2003, Plan signed an MoU with the Department of Education, Masbate, to provide ALS in Masbate.

3.3 Social mobilization

Motivating the barangay captains and councils, some of the key partners in the project, was a challenge. "Of course there was resistance," Dr. Cantre says. One reason is that some mayors prefer to focus budgets on infrastructure, not human development. They want to build roads, buildings and transportation waiting sheds. They can put their names on those structures, a form of free publicity to imprint their achievement in the mind of the public. There is no denying that Masbate needs roads and other infrastructure. However, the lack of skilled people to take advantage of such infrastructure is really holding the region back.

Dr. Cantre and his colleagues in the Department of Education spent a lot of time convincing local leaders that their illiterate and out-of-school youths and adults could become productive members of the community and help their communities develop if given a chance at education. A key strategy in convincing many of the local politicians was outlined by Dr Tejeresas, ALS Regional Coordinator of the DepEd in Masbate: "We told them that we would tell the community that this project is your accomplishment. Your name will be on it. You will get the credit. And when these people become educated, they will end up voting for you." In fact, Tejeresas says, the son of one district leader ran for vice mayor of his municipality, campaigning on the notion that he brought the programme to his community, and won.

3.4 Literacy mapping and surveys

The first step in implementing the project was actually part of the advocacy phase: literacy mapping. In the surveys conducted by Dr. Cantre and the Department of Education, and facilitated by Plan, the team found there were many illiterates in every barangay and even more out-of-school youths and adults. They also surveyed out of school people as to why they had not completed their education. Many cited financial reasons; some said they did not have enough time to attend formal classes, while others said there was no school close enough for them to attend. This information helped Plan and barangay officials identify candidates for the project and helped them design the project to meet the candidates' needs. Barangay and Department of Education officials, and Plan workers, helped persuade potential candidates. Many didn't need persuading; they jumped at the opportunity. Each class has about 25 learners with a total of 250 learners in each school.

The reason cited most frequently by candidates for not attending formal schooling was a lack of time. Plan responded by adjusting the programme's requirements so learners can choose when they want to attend. Some said they were ashamed to be seen going to school at their age. So they are given a choice of where they wanted to learn. Even with the learning modules (subjects), they are given a chance to choose from a menu of subjects. If there is something they want to learn for which a module does not exist, Plan and its partners try to create one.

3.5 Two-pronged approach

Those who cannot pass a basic literacy test are enrolled in the Basic Literacy Program. This course focuses on reading, writing and arithmetic and requires 300 class hours to complete. Learners often study on their own at home and receive home visits by Instructional Managers to check on their work and assist them with lessons. The modules cover five Learning Strands – Communication Skills, Critical Thinking and Problem Solving, Sustainable Use of Resources/Productivity, Development of Self and A Sense of Community, and Expanding One's World Vision. These are equivalent to the formal school subjects of English, Math, Science, Social Studies and Filipino Language.

Those who complete the Basic Literacy Program, or who were already literate but never finished school, can then enrol in the Continuing Education Program. This programme takes 700 to 800 hours over 10 months. Learners have the options to choose the place, the time and the lessons. There are a total of 520 modules to choose from, but there are 87 core modules for primary level education and 91 for secondary level. They cover English, Math, Science, Social Studies and Filipino Language. Most learners choose to study with their peers in classes held at learning centres set up in the barangays. Before enrolling, Plan workers give them an orientation to explain the project and its benefits, and answer questions.

3.6 Commitment from beneficiaries

If learners decide to enrol, they must then negotiate and sign an Individual Learning Agreement. This is essentially a written pledge to do their best to complete the course. In it they choose the subjects they want to learn, and when and where they will take classes. This puts learners and instructors on the same page. "It's labour intensive for us to be that flexible, but it pays off when we see how committed the learners are," Tejeresas says.

3.7 Contributions from barangay officials

The project was implemented in eight barangays during its first year. Barangay officials made financial contributions from their budgets, helped identify potential learners, and set up spaces for the learning centres. Some actually built learning centres. The centres are modest one- or two-room concrete structures. Some are open air. Officials also chose the IMs, or teachers, themselves. The IMs must come from the barangay, and have a college degree in any subject, a good moral character, a good reputation in the community and good interpersonal skills. IMs received a five-day training course conducted by the staff of the Department of Education Bureau of Alternative Learning System before the start of the project.

3.8 From completion to accreditation

Those who complete the Continuing Education Program may be eligible to take the government's Accreditation and Equivalency test, which gives them the equivalent of an elementary or high school diploma. Various factors, including the availability of test papers, determine whether or not they may take this test. Those who don't take the test may still be eligible for vocational or other training and scholarships from the government's Technical Education and Skills Development Agency.

4 Outcomes and analysis

4.1 Higher passing rates

The percentage of learners from Plan's programme who take and pass the government's Accreditation and Equivalency examination is higher than the national average. ALS passing rate is 37.1 per cent, while the national average is just over 20 per cent.[17] The interpretation of these figures requires caution since they are not strictly comparable, as explained later. However ALS' success rate certainly exceeded expectations; its target was a 25 per cent passing rate.

Still, a 37.1 per cent passing rate means most students are failing the test. Plan and DepEd officials attribute the reasons to a lack of financial and technical support and the capacities of the learners themselves. Most of them have missed years of schooling and so are below average students, Plan and DepEd officials say. Below-average students may need more personalized attention, but that is difficult to get in a class of 25 learners, even with the commitment and efforts of the Instructional Managers. The IMs themselves also have some limitations. They are not experts and they do not have extensive education in some of the subjects they teach. "Some of the subjects, such as chemistry and biology, are difficult even for formal learners," Plan's Campos says.

A glance at some of the science and math modules supports that contention. The information in some of them would be challenging for an urban high school student. They must be very difficult for a farmer, fisherman or housewife who received only very basic education and have not been in school for years. Some of the lessons would also appear to be completely irrelevant to their daily lives. Nonetheless, the modules reflect the national curriculum.

In the context of NFE in the Philippines, however, the ALS learners' passing rate is almost twice the national average. Even if there is still a long way to go to get the majority of students passing, that has to be regarded as significant success.

The 37.1 percent passing rate only applies to those who actually take the Accreditation and Equivalency test. Many learners don't have the opportunity to take it. The reason is that the Department of Education only supplies a limited number of test papers. This would seem to be a factor beyond the project's control. If Plan were to propose funding the reproduction of test papers for its learners, it would raise questions about equal access. Decisions have to be made at the barangay level about which learners will be allowed to take the test. This raises the question of whether the passing rate of Plan's learners is higher than the national average because students more likely to pass are chosen to take the test. Then again, the shortage of test papers is not limited only to Plan areas, so other ALS programmes are in a similar situation.

4.2 Learners' constraints

One constraint faced by some learners is the distance from their homes to the learning centres. A barangay of hundreds of farming families can cover a wide area. The lack of paved roads and an affordable transportation system can discourage learners from attending class. There doesn't appear to be an answer for this constraint unless some sort of transportation or transportation subsidy could be provided for learners who live far from learning centres. With funds already hard to come by, that would appear to be beyond the means of local officials.

Another problem cited by students, particularly older students, in almost every community was hecklers. As they walk to the learning centres, or as they are being taught, certain members of the community take pleasure in shouting insults and taunting them. The theme of the heckling is that they are too old already and so it is foolish to be pursuing an education. In barangay Milagros, the heckling so disturbed learners that the Instructional Manager moved the classes indoors to a cramped and stuffy room that is dark and dingy. Others can only encourage their learners to be strong and believe in themselves.

4.3 Learners gain confidence

Increased confidence is one characteristic IMs and others have noticed in many learners as a result of the project. Dr. Cantre says it has given them more motivation in life. It also offered a lot of options for them, as they can pursue higher levels of education, or be gainfully employed as a result of undergoing the programme. It gave them more choices and a better chance in life. They can move on to higher education if they pass the Accreditation and Equivalency test, or go on to take the government civil service examination. A couple of learners have already been hired by the civil service and a couple have gone on to college, he says. If they complete the course, but don't take or don't pass the Accreditation and Equivalency exam, they can decide if they want vocational training. It gives them more choices and a better chance in life, he says.

4.4 Benefits for communities and families

The programme also increased learners' confidence and improved their status in the community. This also increased their participation in community development projects, and increased their capability to help improve their family life and conditions. The learners themselves say the courses have given them knowledge they find useful, such as greater overall knowledge about health, including learning to give themselves and their children a nutritious diet and learning about herbal remedies they can prepare in the barangay. They speak of how to turn trash into compost, which keeps their communities cleaner and provides them with fertilizers. A barangay health volunteer in Bangad says the modules increased her knowledge about health, paediatric health and how to give medicines.

Some describe that they gained better understanding of how to run their small businesses, and in turn are seeing small but helpful increases in their incomes. Others say they learned how to better budget their household expenses so they can stretch their earnings farther. One useful skill cited by learners in almost every community was the ability to read their electric meters. "No one can fool us now," says one learner. One IM says her learners are now able to help their own children with their schoolwork. In doing that, the project is actually indirectly benefiting another generation, and instilling greater respect for education among more people.

Vignette 2: A dream delayed but not denied

When she was 14 years old, Lydia Dadivas was all set to start secondary school.Then fate intervened against the young student. Lydia was struck by dysentery, an intestinal infection that nearly took her life. Her parents sent her to stay with relatives in another province where medical care was better than in Masbate.

When she returned months later to barangay Bangad, her parents, both farmers, told her to forget about education. The nearest secondary school was 45 kilometres away. They needed her to help out at home. "I was sad, but I tried to study by myself and did what my parents said," Lydia says. "We didn't have much money, and I couldn't finance it myself."

Lydia ended up marrying a fisherman, and in between raising seven children she sells dried fish in the local market. Her youngest child is 11 and the oldest 27. She would like for all of them to get something she didn't – as much education as possible. Her oldest daughter finished college, but she and her husband don't have enough money to send the others.

Then the Alternative Learning System came to Bangad. Although she is already 51 years old, Lydia didn't hesitate to enroll. Not only that, she convinced her 26-year-old son, who never finished secondary school, to join as well. As if taking up studies after 36 years wasn't difficult enough, Lydia and some of her other adult classmates also had to endure heckling from some other members of the community. "They laughed and said I was old and still studying. Some people told us we are crazy, that education is useless for us. Most of them never finished school themselves," she says. "We had to hide from them sometimes as they would gather when we would walk to school. But I don't care. It's my right to get an education."

And get one she did. Lydia was one of only two learners in Bangad who passed the Accreditation and Equivalency examination. She now has a diploma hanging on the wall of her modest home.

Lydia says the course taught her about capital and profit, and that's helped her to earn a little bit more. She would like to study more and take the civil service exam, but she still has children to raise. "But now, I can work for the barangay. They can't question my abilities," she says.

Although her son did not pass the A and E exam, Lydia says she will encourage him to try again, and others to take the programme. "It was a good experience," she says. "I finally realized my dream. It was my only dream. I'm so happy and proud to have a diploma."

4.5 Building capacity among partners and stakeholders

For partners and stakeholders the project has also had a positive impact. Tejeresas says education officials in the district have been reinvigorated, as they now see the project moving forward and getting some results. They now feel it is possible to make a difference. It also gave them practical experience at advocacy and social mobilization. For the IMs, some gained a chance to teach and gain experience while preparing to take the licensing test for teachers. One who had previously given up the profession says it gave her a second chance to do what she had always wanted. For all, it gave them increased status in the community and the satisfaction of helping others. Barangays gained an increased spirit of community, and barangay officials also gained credit for helping to bring the project to their people. In turn, they have made a commitment to education by setting aside some money from their budgets. And as the learners in one barangay say, they have no law and order problems anymore. While there is no hard evidence the project is responsible for that, they felt it had an impact.

4.6 Communities take responsibility for education

What is innovative about the programme's outcomes, says Dr. Tejeresas, is the sense of ownership by the communities. Previously, education was viewed as a responsibility solely of the government. Now, by setting contributing money from their own budgets and donating time and materials for learning centres and other requirements for the project, communities have adopted an attitude that they also have some responsibility for educating their own. That feeds into building community spirit.

But the major innovation of the project is that it has put the idea in the minds of the Masabate population that education and schooling doesn't only have to take place in a formal school setting. It can take place anywhere, from a community centre, to someone's home, to under the shade of a tree. Before the ALS, people thought education was over once they were out of school. Now people see that they can receive education anywhere, under all sorts of circumstances, and that their efforts and achievements will be recognized and accredited. The programme has instilled among the disadvantaged the belief that an education is not just valuable, but attainable.

4.7 Lessons learned

Three key lessons are worth noting from the ALS programme. First of all, the programme could not have been successfully implemented without the active involvement of all education stakeholders in the community. These include local government, the Department of Education, community leaders and members, children, and parents. Even in the poorest communities in Masbate, villagers contribute resources (material donation, community space, volunteer work, etc) that support the ALS project in the area. This has led to a sense of ownership and better sustainability of the ALS project in the community.

Secondly, the rigorous monitoring and supervision is essential to ensure the quality of ALS programmes and their graduates. Whether done through field coaching and mentoring, or regular monthly consultations, it contributes significantly both to the successful implementation and to the quality of the ALS programme. The strong support system, together with close mentoring and supervision, provided to the IMs by the DepEd ALS Coordinators at the school, district, division, and regional levels, is instrumental in the success of the ALS programme in Masbate Central. The IMs were regularly observed and monitored by the ALS coordinators, to identify weak areas that need help. Facilitated by Plan, IMs also hold regular meetings to share good practices and exchange ideas on how to best teach the learners.

And finally, as the ALS programme has put at the centre the learners' availability, needs and interests, it brings meaningful results to the life of those young people who otherwise would never have been able to complete their education and harvest the benefits therein.

5 Future direction

5.1 Expand, increase and improve

Plan Masbate Central has three main goals for the ALS programme: expand the programme by 40 per cent, increase the percentage of Accreditation and Equivalency examination passers to 70 per cent, and give all learners something positive in the form of knowledge they can use to improve their lives. He also says the goal of the Department of Education is to spread the programme to non-Plan areas.

Expanding the number of communities the programme reaches, and giving learners knowledge they can use appear to be achievable goals. Plan, Dr. Cantre and his team already have developed advocacy and social mobilization skills and strategies that have proven effective. Barangays that already have the programme want it to continue, which in turn helps Dr. Cantre and others convince more local government units to set aside part of their funding for the programmes and adopt it in their communities. Central government policy is to support ALS. The programme has a plan for expansion.

5.2 Sustainability

Everyone involved in the project believes it is sustainable. Institutionally, the Department of Education, Plan and the Philippines NGO Council on Population, Health and Welfare have experience working together and a good relationship. The Department of Education is also planning a workshop on ALS sustainability. Local governments have already set aside some of their own very limited funds and built or provided infrastructure such as classrooms. Other factors that contribute to sustainability include partnerships and strong community involvement. “They are giving their own resources,” Tejeresas says of the communities. Apart from contributing funds from their own meagre budgets, they have put in time and effort constructing learning centres. In some communities, Tejeresas says, they wait for Plan to provide things, but in others they are starting to say they are going to do it themselves. Melba Magnifico, Plan’s Technical Officer for Learning in Masbate says, “We want to see the programme institutionalized in the municipalities.”

5.3 Funding concerns

An area of concern, however, is what will happen when Plan leaves. While insisting the programme is sustainable without Plan, those involved nonetheless recognize that the communities and the Department of Education will be losing resources with Plan’s departure. A reduction in resources could affect salaries of Instructional Managers. Plan and DepEd officials are training the barangays to take over the programme themselves. The Instructional Managers are being prepared for the changeover, and they will probably have to take a pay cut. “We may lose some,” Tejeresas says. Magnifico says Plan has begun training “second liners” as IMs, candidates who are not tertiary degree holders, in case there is a loss of personnel.

5.4 The start of scaling up

As Plan is already mapping out another 14 barangays in which to implement the programme, scaling up to a small degree is already underway. The Department of Education and Plan have already agreed upon this, providing a specific plan to work together again. A true scaling up is beyond the capacity of Plan alone. However, the programme provides a model that the central government and local government units can use for scaling up, if accompanied by strong political will and resources to make it happen.

Endnotes

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14 Interview with Dr. Ricardo Tejeresas, ALS Regional Coordinator of the DepEd in Masbate.

15 'Barangay' is the Filipino term for village, district, or ward.

16 Interview with Rowena Campos, Plan's Country Program Advisor for Learning.

17 Interview with Dr. Ricardo Tejeresas, ALS Regional Coordinator of the DepEd in Masbate, 2006.

Baha'i International Community

EDC

United Nations ESCAP

International Labour Organization

Oxfam

Plan
Be a part of it.

SEAMEO

Save the Children
Sweden

UNAIDS

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNFPA

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