

Report on Community Based Child Protection Mechanisms supported by Plan in Thailand¹

Introduction

Plan is an international child-centred development organization working in 50 developing countries across Africa, Asia and the Americas. Plan's vision is of a world in which all children realize their full potential in societies that respect people's rights and dignity. In recent years² child protection has become a key programming and thematic area for Plan in which it effectively contributes to the realisation of child rights, applying its Child Centred Community Development approach. For Plan International, child protection encompasses the work and activities it undertakes to prevent and respond to all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence against children. Plan's child protection work incorporates work on child protection in emergencies (CPiE), child protection programming referred to as child protection in development (CPiD) and Plan's policy to safe guard children, "Say Yes! to keeping children safe". Specific child protection programmes and strategies include:

- Strengthening Child Protection Systems, focusing particularly on community based protection mechanisms;
- Building the capacity of parents, communities and professionals to provide protection;
- Developing children's resilience and their capacity to participate in their own protection;
- Integrated advocacy to strengthen legal frameworks and for access to basic and specialist services.

Focussing on community based child protection, Plan's increasing efforts are channelled into establishing and sustaining a variety of local mechanisms, reflecting a specific child rights based situation analysis, aiming at creating protective networks and environments expected to ensure protection of all children and contribute towards strengthening national child protection systems.

This brief report provides an overview of community based child protection mechanisms supported by PlanThailand, as a contribution to a regional comparative analysis on community based child protection mechanisms supported by Plan in the Asia region³. The overall objective of this comparative analysis is firstly, to increase learning of various structural and functional aspects of the existing community based child protection mechanisms in Plan Asia and secondly, to provide a comprehensive report on their potential for increased impact and sustainability. The specific objectives of the regional study are:

- to provide a broad mapping of the scale and coverage of community-based child protection mechanisms supported by Plan Country Offices across the Asia Region;
- to document various models and approaches in establishing, supporting and promoting such child protection mechanisms, including defining roles and responsibilities of various actors and processes supporting their functionality;
- to document common roles, responsibilities and key activities of these community based child protection mechanisms;
- to analyze identified achievements and gaps of community based child protection mechanisms in different operational contexts, including crisis/emergency, early recovery and longer-term development;

¹ Kunera Moore, ICPREC (2012)

² particularly since 2006

³ Encompassing an analysis of community based child protection work in 13 out of the 14 countries where Plan works in the region: Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, East Timor, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam. The study did not include Myanmar where Plan's work is more recent and child protection programme work has not yet started.

- to provide a broad overview of lessons learned on key components and processes contributing towards effective child protection and sustainable community based mechanisms.

Methodology

The comparative analysis study is carried out by a consultancy group⁴ in 3 key stages involving data collection, analysis and synthesis:

1. Data collection through a desk review of available information and mapping existing community based child protection mechanisms across Asia (*January – April 2012*).
2. Data collection and participatory analysis through field visits in 5 countries (Cambodia, East Timor, Nepal, Pakistan and Vietnam) using child/user friendly participatory tools, interviews, Focus Group Discussions and observation with all relevant stakeholders (*May – June 2012*)
3. Analysis and Synthesis: comparative analysis of existing models and report writing (*May – September 2012*)

Ethical guidelines have been applied throughout the study, particularly in preparing for, undertaking and following up to the field work to ensure safe, ethical and inclusive participation of girls and boys with attention to issues of: informed consent, assessment of risks, and opportunities to report on protection concerns relevant to Plan's child protection policy.

In countries where the field study did not take place, the report builds upon a mapping exercise conducted by the consultants, based on available country documents⁵ and verified and updated by Plan's child protection focal points in each country. These country reports were further informed by primary qualitative data from Plan's child protection programme staff, civil society and/or government partners, as well as adult and child members of community based child protection mechanisms (CBCPMs) using the following two tools: 'H' assessments – undertaken by different stakeholders to share their views on the main strengths and achievements, challenges and weaknesses of their CBCPMs; as well as practical suggestions to improve CBCPMs in their country context. Secondly, Stories of Most Significant Change and Most Significant Challenge (SMSC/C) relating to experiences of community based child protection mechanisms were shared by various stakeholders. The Thailand Plan office collected 9 stories of most significant change and 8 stories of most significant challenge. In addition, both Plan's CP team as well as a group of CBCPMs went through the H-assessment exercise, involving 29 people out of whom 7 men, 3 women, 7 boys and 12 girls. Plan also conducted an H-assessment involving 1 female Plan Child Protection Adviser / 1 male Plan Child Protection Project Manager / 1 male Government partner Director / 1 male NGO Partner Director / 1 female NGO partner Director / 1 female Government partner Director / 2 males Government partner coordinator / 4 females Government Partner coordinator / 1 female NGO partner Coordinator.

Brief Introduction to the Country Context

Thailand is a constitutional monarchy, with a prime minister in charge of the government and the king the head of state. In 2009, the country's total population was 63.5 million; around 25% (15.8 million) of whom were children. Thailand's economy has grown rapidly in recent decades. Between 1987 and 2004, the country's gross domestic product expanded two-and-a-half times, growing from US\$56 billion to US\$140 billion; and the gross national income per capita increased from US\$1,060 to US\$2,400⁶. The proportion of people below the national poverty line decreased by a third, from

⁴ ICPREC – International Child Protection Rights and Evaluation Consultants led by Claire O'Kane and Kunera Moore.

⁵ Country Strategic Plans, child protection proposals, progress reports, training reports on child protection and CBCPM, minutes from children's gatherings/ initiatives etc.

⁶ Jitsuchon, S., & Richter, K. *Thailand's poverty maps: From construction to application*. Retrieved from http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPGI/Resources/342674-1092157888460/493860-1192739384563/10412-13_p241-260.pdf

27.2% in 1990 to 9.8% in 2004⁷. Despite its prosperity, Thailand has a low level of urbanisation and 42.6% of the population still earns a living from agriculture, a sector which generates 11.4% of Thailand's gross domestic product.⁸

Certain groups of the population are systematically left out of the development, most notably, stateless children, hill tribes, refugees and children infected with HIV/AIDS.⁹ As such, a large proportion of children in Thailand, particularly Burmese and highland minority children, are still:

1. Vulnerable to child abuse and exploitation
2. Denied basic rights, such as the right to a birth certificate and citizenship;
3. Not yet enrolled in the education system, specifically after primary school;
4. Lacking access to child-friendly services for victims of abuse and exploitation; And
5. Inadequate information and inequality sexual and reproductive health services to protect from HIV/AIDS.

The inequalities in the lives of various children in Thailand have specific historic and geographic foci, reflecting structural inequalities. Children from highland minorities in northern Thailand, including Chiang Rai province, have faced and are facing greater constraints than children in the rest of the country. These children are less likely to have birth certificates, citizenship, be in school or receiving a quality education, and thus are more vulnerable to early marriage as well as abuse and exploitation, including commercial sexual exploitation.

Since 2000, when Thailand established a child rights sub-committee to ensure that all national legislation upholds the CRC, its government and non-government expert members have revised 17 acts. At the core of Thailand's laws protecting child rights are two acts: the Child Protection Act of 2003, which states that all children under 18 are protected by the state from all forms of abuse, commercial exploitation, neglect, violence, and discrimination and established 77 provincial child protection committees, multi-disciplinary child protection teams, and child protection funds, and the National Child and Youth Development Promotion Act of 2008, which encourages participation in child and youth centers and councils. In addition, the 2002 amendment to the National Education Act of 1999 ensures the right to free basic education through grade 12 for Thai citizens and makes education compulsory through grade 9 for all children.

Brief overview of Plan's strategic child protection work and the scope of CBCPM work

Plan has been working in Thailand since 1981 and has started its child protection program in 2006. Plan focuses its operations on the most-at-risk populations Plan's 2012-16 Strategic Plan envisions children and youths belonging to the most-at-risk populations¹⁰ in Thailand - highlanders, migrants, seafarers, the stateless, and people living with HIV/AIDS – to enjoy their rights to education, economic security, sexual and reproductive health, and protection from all forms of abuse, exploitation, and violence as well as from disasters.

Plan implements its programmes through local civil society partners, a strategy it began to adopt in the fiscal year of 2011 under the interim plan. Within the next five years, it will develop the capacity of civil society groups in a variety of areas, including leadership, organisational and programme/project management, resource mobilisation and financial management, rights-based programming and advocacy. For child protection, Plan's CSP 2012-2016 goal is that functional child protection systems in communities are established and that child protection laws are effectively

⁷ *Thailand Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Report 2004*. Retrieved from http://www.undg.org/archive_docs/4581-Thailand_MDG_Report_-_English.pdf

⁸ Plan International, CSP 2012-16, page 13

⁹ *Idem*, page 14-16

¹⁰ Refugees were no longer included as UNHCR and other institutions are already looking after their needs.

enforced. More specifically, Plan aims to better protect children in 264 communities from neglect, abuse, exploitation and violence, even in emergencies.

Plan Thailand started its community based child protection programme in 2006, with funding from the Plan Japan office. The project lasted for 3 years and focussed on Chiangmai and Chiangrai provinces. The main strategy was to support the setting-up of Child Protection Committees at the provincial, district, sub-district and community levels. Plan also supports the establishment of corresponding surveillance, reporting and referral mechanism for child abuse cases at the village, sub-district and district levels linked to the provincial Child Protection Committee. Plan trains these committees to identify direct threats to children during emergencies. In addition, the threat from unsafe Information Communication Technology (ICT) is increasingly high; therefore, Plan focuses on protecting children from ICT related abuse. Absence of birth registration also results in children's rights violations. Plan will also work on children acquiring birth registration.

To date, Plan has established village committees in 54 communities, out of which 32 are in Chiang Mai province and 22 in Chiang Rai province. Until 2011, Plan worked in Srisaket province, where Plan assisted 14 village committees with improving child protection. All communities are rural development settings. These village committees link to the provincial child protection committees through the district and sub-district child protection committees, that are government based and run.

Structural aspects of CBCPMs

Provincial Child Protection Committees and Village Committees

The provincial committees on child protection were set up by the government of Thailand as per the 2003 child protection act. The village committees are existing village structures that take on child protection as an extra role, with assistance from Plan. The village committees are government supported administrative bodies managing local administrative and development issues. Plan works with these village committees on child protection.

The village committees have 11 to 15 members, none of them children. Out of the 54 village committees, 12 also have got youth groups. Some village committees have the youth group leader participate in the village committee, but this is in its early stages. Plan Thailand is currently working on more child representation across all its programmes. Approximately 50 percent come from marginalized backgrounds, whereas the provincial councils have neither child members nor representation from marginalized backgrounds, being an official government body, but have at least 30% women members. Members are defined by the Child protection act of 2003 and by the Royal Thai Government Gazette of 2008.¹¹ According to these, the provincial governor presides over the provincial committee. Other members include the chief of provincial labour and social affairs office, the provincial prosecutor and other government and non governmental partners, selected by the governor. The 2008 Gazette defines that the village chief presides over the village committee, whose other members include representatives from different families and professions, youth and women groups, selected by the village chief. The replacement of committee members is only due to death,

¹¹ Child Protection Act of 2003, which states in article 17, "there shall be a Provincial Child Protection Committee, composed of the Governor as Chairperson of the Committee, members comprising the Provincial Prosecutor, Chief of Provincial Labour and Social Welfare...(and).from private organizations...Chief of the Provincial Social Development and Welfare office shall act as member and Secretary."At community level, according to the Royal Thai Government Gazette 2008, Ministry of Interior, "The criteria of village committee", the village head is the Chairperson and the members are composed of a representative of a number of household in the community, of particular activity groups, of career groups and professional groups. At provincial level, according to article 18 of 2003 Act, the Chairperson and committees "shall apply mutatis mutandis to the assumption of office, vacation of office, appointment of replacement committee members and the performance of duties of the distinguished members "

resignation or being removed by the district head.¹² Provincial Child Protection Committees meet semi-annual (2 times a year) whilst the Village Committees meet on a monthly basis. Both structures are part of the government child protection system.

The committees do not receive any stipend or other incentives for their child protection networks. There are no terms of reference guiding the committees' work. According to Plan Thailand, because of the clear role division amongst the provincial council members, there is no need to further define the committees' role. On the village level, the roles are less clearly defined but the committees' role is clear according to Plan Thailand, namely to identify cases, follow-up on the needed response and coordinate this. Both provincial and village committees keep minutes of their meetings.¹³

Functional aspects of CBCPMs

Plan's work on CBCPMs aims to strengthen the child protection systems at all levels and is currently implemented in Chiangmai and Chiangrai provinces. The Village Committees' child protection objectives are to empower communities, including children, to become involved in building local child protection systems and to respond to child protection concerns; specifically: roles include educating community members about children's rights and protection issues (safe migration, village's rules and roles of family and caretakers in protecting children), and strengthening the response and referral system (by establishment of clear reporting procedures and linking with relevant government/child welfare agencies). The village committees predominantly work on prevention and protection, followed by referrals, reintegration of former working, trafficked or otherwise abused children. The village committee works with approximately 2-3 other volunteers in the community who are also trained by Plan on child protection, child rights and universal birth registration. These volunteers can be parents, youth or elders; some of the volunteers who are trained by Plan are part of the village committee and others are not but participate in one off training events. Children and youth are involved in child to child awareness raising. Adults inform other adults, through events but also by organising smaller sessions.¹⁴

The village committees report cases to the One Stop Crisis Centres (OSCCs) that have been established at district / sub-district level in the respective districts where Plan works. In 1999, a cabinet resolution ordered the establishment of One Stop Crisis Centers (OSCCs) at all provincial and district hospitals in Thailand. These OSCCs are multidisciplinary centres, where victims of abuse can receive the necessary support and follow-up care and advice. The OSCCs report cases to the provincial Child Protection Committees. The provincial child protection committees are responsible for overseeing the overall operation of the centres within their provinces. The committees have sub-committees with mostly government agencies' members, who work on the district level to collect data, receive reports, provide legal aid and offer rehabilitation services to child victims of violence. Tambon Administrative Organisation (TAO) are members of the committee (following Act 2003 on the child protection system) and should allocate budget to the Child Protection System in the community, but this does not happen sufficiently.

Plan works with the Provincial Child Protection Committees to support the development of child protection systems and to appropriately respond to child protection concerns. The main purpose of this team is to provide support to children who fall victims of violence and exploitation, to prevent them from being further abused. Committee members include the hospitals which hosts the OSCC and which provides medical check-ups; the Provincial Public Health Office which coordinates among different team members and maintains public health databases; the police who carry out preventive work and investigations and provide legal information; the public administration that facilitates and supports the overall operation; education agencies that follow up on reported school cases and

¹² According to Government Gazette 2008

¹³ Plan Thailand response on Thailand CBCPM mapping document, 23rd April 2012, page 6

¹⁴ Plan Thailand, CSPII, 2012-16 and Project proposals to Plan Germany and Japan NOs for improving child protection systems

lastly, NGOs that coordinate and support the child protection committee and provide shelter for victims of violence. Simultaneously, the team has a role to advocate other stakeholders and players at both provincial and the lower levels. Many NGOs partner with this council and are working on strengthening the Provincial Child Protection Committee to function better.

Case management

Community members (children / youths / adults) report the case to village headman who refers cases to OSCC at district / sub-district level and the OSCC staff will report to provincial level. The OSCC will decide whether to report a case to the police or not. The caseload (across Plan's project areas) mostly consists of birth registration, which helps children with accessing education and health care; sexual and commercial exploitation of children; violence against children, mostly in schools; child trafficking; child neglect, mostly related to orphans and children whose parents are labour migrants. Plan Thailand's birth registration program in close cooperation with the government raises awareness about the right to citizenship through campaigns across target areas, at provincial to local levels through different media outlets. In addition, Plan Thailand actively discourages violence against children in schools, through training and awareness events at schools for teachers and pupils focussing on children's rights and child protection. A very interesting approach to the prevention of commercial and sexual exploitation is Plan's funded programme of bringing back youth who have been exposed to risks of the cities to share their experiences with their communities and especially to prevent children falling in the same traps.

Between October 2011 and March 2012, 175 cases were reported to OSCCs across Plan target areas. Out of these 175, 87 cases are sexual abuse and 88 cases are physical abuse. 18 of the sexual abuse cases reportedly consisted of consensual intercourse with their boyfriends and 35 were rape cases. OSCC only reported 46 cases to the police. Out of the 88 physical abuse cases, only one victim was male; all others were female. Only 32 of these cases were reported to the police. It is interesting to note that overall, approximately half the cases are reported to the police. Confidentiality is guarded by training on the importance of confidentiality and by a regulated reporting system. Also, the multidisciplinary team that discusses and assesses cases ensures the best interests of the child are applied.

The most successful cases are birth registration cases. Committees find it difficult to identify and assist victims of child abuse and child trafficking, because of the sensitivity of these issues and the fear of reporting.

Additionally, the village committees work on non-protection issues, which are (1) security (2) community development planning (3) economic (4) society, environment and public health and (5) education, religion and culture.

Children's participation and involvement in CBCPM

Child Groups/ Clubs

In the 54 communities where Plan has established the CBCPMs, 12 youth clubs have been established. These youth play significant roles in providing knowledge about children rights and protection to community members especially to other children and youth. These groups were established by the children themselves. Child rights and child protection are among their goals but they often work on other issues as well. Plan aims for all the youth groups to have representation at the Village Committee, but this is still not the case at this point in time. This will help their cooperation in awareness raising, campaigns and other activities.

The role of children's representation within the CBCPMs

Children do not directly participate in the Village Committee. Children did participate in action based research, project design and in follow up activities. At the beginning of the project in Srisaket in 2009, children / young people representatives from 5 districts were involved in designing research,

collecting data and analyzing as well as presenting the data to the concerned agencies. They formed a 'young researchers' groups' under the guidance and support from adults.

Plan Thailand uses child-centred community development (CCCD) in all its programmes, which caters for processes that allow children voice to be heard. The children themselves are also responsible to follow up on the agreed upon activities. However, at all stages, and as much as possible, there is a varying degree of child participation, depending on local capacities and leadership.

Children have participated in various training events, empowering them to be agents of change in their own communities and families, to try to stop violence against children, to stimulate birth registration and citizenship and to make their communities child friendlier. The level of child participation may not be at the stage where children lead or initiate the activities. Plan Thailand is planning to establish child /youth groups in all its target areas following National Child and Youth Development Promotion Act of 2008.

Children are mostly involved in the CBCP work through awareness raising. In addition, children have been involved in child protection research and in contributing to child friendly communities. Plan/partners have organized trainings for children so that children were able to take a lead to organize:

1. child to child campaigns about birth registration and also on child protection issues;
2. radio campaigns about birth registration
3. film making about risks of child trafficking, child sexual and commercial abuse and exploitation; these films have been shown in communities of origin.
4. campaigns in school against violence against children.

All campaigns are accompanied by flyers and other materials that are handed out and shared with children, teachers and community members.

Recently, Plan Thailand together with the International Institute for Child Rights and Development (IICRD) organized a series of consultation workshop with 20 CP-experienced youths to participate in planning and designing a joint Child Protection manual and to become a core group who will share their work with other youths and community members.

Strengths

1. Children involved in child protection, learn to work with authorities in village and schools as partners;
2. Children involved in research learn to analyse their own problems and to identify and implement possible solutions. Children have become more aware of their rights;
3. Children and youth take lead in mobilising communities around child protection issues;
4. Children are given mobile phones to monitor the situation of child Right and Child protection (including the unsafe ICT) and report online to Plan and partners;
5. Children's voices are more and more heard, contributing to more parental understanding of children's issues and problems;
6. Children's peer support has contributed to an increase in children reporting abuse;

Challenges

1. Thai culture requires children not to share their opinions in public but instead to listen and follow orders from adults.
2. The concept of child rights and child protection is new both for children and parents. This requires a lot of training and awareness raising to make sure the notion of children's rights is taken seriously and children's rights are actively upheld by communities and their members.
3. Children are not yet directly represented at the village committees.

Opportunities for increasing children and young people's meaningful participation

The Thai Government's active promotion of child and youth involvement in community development and in their own protection is extremely encouraging and provides a great gateway for Plan to implement its child focussed development through. Child participation is one of Plan's 2012-16 CSP's main focuses at every stage of their programming and planning. Plan Thailand's child group work is in its early stages but with both government and Plan support for more engagement, and an increasingly better educated Thai youth, this can be rapidly scaled up, incorporating lessons learnt from Plan experiences with child participation across the Asia region.

Capacity and support systems

According to Plan's CP advisor, the village committee members have limited knowledge and understanding about child right and child protection. Reportedly, the committees prioritize economic issues and infrastructure above child development. In addition, listening to children is still alien to most of the committee members. On a provincial level, capacity of key stakeholders is improving because of the many stakeholders involved in building their capacity.

The village committees do not manage their own funds. However, because of the government policies to support the protection network, it is hoped that the government and Tambon Administrative Organisation can fund some of the protection network activities in villages, enhancing their independence. Emergency funds to assist cases' referrals are insufficient and should be leveraged by the government or Plan partners.

Plan contributes to the capacity of the child protection system at provincial, district and village level in multiple ways:

1. At provincial level, Plan Staff is a member of the Provincial Child Protection Committee, for which it assists in reviewing the process and coordination amongst the agencies for case referral and management.
2. Plan organizes training events for both provincial and district child protection committees on child rights and child protection, referral, Universal Birth Registration.
3. At community level, local NGOs in partnership with Plan are working closely with the Plan Child Protection team to ensure effective implementation and building capacities of village committees. Plan organizes trainings for these partners, who have various degrees of capacity. This is instrumental in facilitating the participatory development processes at both the school and community levels.
4. Also at community level, Plan partners organize awareness raising events for community members and children to help enhance the understanding of child protection and child abuse and advise on relevant services / follow-up agencies. Other trainings of community members' volunteers focussed on birth registration, ICT and child protection and child protection in emergencies. Children in specific have been part of trainings focusing on child protection, participation and representation, which are followed up every year.¹⁵

Linkages with civil society and Government

Both the village and the provincial committees work with various actors, ranging from government to civil society and businesses. Some of these partners are, like Plan, working on capacity building. Other are purely service providers or referral agencies. Given that the village committee's responsibilities are much wider than child protection alone, the village committee's partners on non protection issues will not be discussed here.

Community level Given the fact that the village committee itself is part of the local authority, it is essentially integrated in the government structure. Plan's work with the village committees is now all organized through local partners. The CBOs build capacity and raise awareness of community

¹⁵ See overview of trainings in Annex I

members on child protection, linking them with the existing referral system. The committee works with local childcare centres, shelters, children and youth, lawyers, hospitals and local community leaders and volunteers, children's child rights groups. In addition, Plan works through community based organizations (CBOs) who have been working in the communities in a number of years but not particular in Child protection component.

Provincial level: Plan's most important provincial partner is the **Provincial Office of Social Development and Human Security** which has been partners with Plan Thailand in 3 dimensions: as a provincial committee member; as the department in charge of child protection work in the local communities; and as the department with expertise in social protection issues.

Other government partners of the District and Provincial Child Protection Committees, are the Tambon Administration Organisation (TAO), universities, Education Service Areas offices (ESAO), schools and Non Formal Education, the Provincial Police Department, the Ministry of Public Health, the Provincial Juvenile and Family Court, Maefahluang Hospital, Chiangrai Public Hospital etc. Plan also works with NGOs on provincial/district levels, including the Centre for the Protection of Children's Rights (CPCR) and Mirror Foundation both of whom have specific experience in building the capacity of Provincial Child Protection Committees. In addition, Plan works with ECPAT Foundation, UNICEF Thailand, Hill Area Development Foundation, ADRA and Mirror Foundation, who all work in child protection in the same provinces.

Horizontal reach out between CBCPMs: The different village committees have had some joint training events, but no cross-learning visits have been organised, nor do representatives of the different village committees sit in on the provincial child protection meetings.

Linkages with official CP system: The village committees, OSCC and the provincial child protection committees are the backbone of the official child protection system.

Links with Plan's other sector work: Plan Thailand (according to the previous CSP) will integrate the Community Based Child Protection system with other sectors by combining activities with the same target groups. For instance, early childhood education is combined with awareness about birth registration and work with youth groups on HIV AIDS also shares messages about child protection.

Monitoring and evaluation system and process

General M&E, research overview of Plan Thailand

Plan's current CSP outlines a new MER framework, making up for the lack of sufficient and effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track progress and gauge the outcomes and impacts of its activities in Plan Thailand's previous CSPs. The CSP MER framework stresses the need for continuous reflection on lessons learnt and best practices, their documentation, and application to improve programme quality and inform policy advocacy. The MER framework emphasises the use of standard indicators and secondary data to promote harmonisation with government systems and the CRC monitoring process, but more importantly, it provides qualitative information and serves to promote transparency and downward accountability to children, their families and communities.¹⁶

Child protection programmes

The government run child protection programme, including the village committees, the OSCC and the provincial committees are monitored by an interagency working group at district level; they monitor activities and visit the programme areas. Plan is part of these interagency groups/committees.

¹⁶ Plan Thailand, CSR III, Appendix 2

Plan involves children at the onset of the program with baseline data gathering; Plan partners train the children to conduct this research and in analyzing the data. Furthermore, children are key informants or data sources for monitoring and evaluation, but not involved in the ongoing M&E processes themselves. The CSP plans that communities should be involved in the monitoring, following the UNICEF supported Child Protection Monitoring System (CPMS)¹⁷ as follows: *Plan will link its efforts to the CPMS by which it can monitor corresponding increase or decrease in the number of cases of child abuse and can then track how many of the villages, sub-districts and districts are making use of the data generated for planning purposes. Plan will document recurring issues and challenges encountered in the field and raise these with the appropriate government agencies concerned. All results of evaluation and research studies will be disseminated widely among internal (staff) and external (partners, other institutions) audiences.* Plan Thailand will be working on this in the near future but has not so far.

Sustainability and scale up¹⁸

Plan Thailand strengthens and supports the government run child protection system, which in itself is the best ingredient for both sustainability and scale-up. The quality and accessibility of the system depends on capacity and sufficient resourcing. Plan is actively engaged in strengthening the network on multiple levels (as discussed earlier in this report) and is funding these capacity building initiatives. For the following five years, Plan Thailand plans to invest € 3,930,586 out of which eighty-nine (89%) should come from national offices' grants. Plan has handed over its child protection programmes in Srisaket to the provincial Social Welfare offices, which are in charge of the child protection network in the provinces and who have funds to manage the network. This network is reportedly strong and meets regularly to provide technical support to individual cases and to further child protection policy within the province. Financial support comes from within the government and in particular from sub-district. In addition, the village committees have access to funds for general development (from the Tambon, according to the 2003 Act) out of which any child protection activity should be paid. However, Plan has found that child protection is not high on the agenda and that as such, village committees prefer to spend their budget on other sectors. In addition, the villages can raise their own funds/resources. However, villages complain that they don't have funds to refer emergency cases. The committees should have access to a meeting space, according to that same 2003 Act, but it is not clear to what extent this is reality. Lastly, other supporting agencies also contribute to the child protection system, both in terms of capacity and funding. The provincial networks include a wide array of actors, who work well together towards a clear goal, contributing towards sustainability.

So the set-up for sustainability and for a country-wide child protection system is there. The question is whether local communities receive sufficient training to become aware about their rights and available services so that they can push for the government to improve support for child protection programmes and services at all levels. Plan is working on both levels and is aware of the training needs at both the demand and the supply side.

Key achievements, challenges and lessons learned¹⁹

Most significant lessons learned

The results of working as a 'multidisciplinary team' are very positive and will be replicated across the country. Networking among partner agencies and target groups has formed a strong bond to prevent children and vulnerable groups of people to become victims of human trafficking.. The multidisciplinary team allows for quick referrals to relevant services

Significant achievements

¹⁷ CSPIII, CRSA page 32

¹⁸ Documents contributing to this section include the evaluation reports of both the 2006-9 project in Chiang Mai and the 2009-11 project in Srisaket provinces. In addition, the CP focal point has given valuable insight within the CBCP mapping document. Also, CSP III gives valuable insight into lessons learnt.

¹⁹ Idem plus consultants' analysis and H-assessments and SMSC/C

1. The creation / set up of children and youth network in Maefaluang district to lead the campaign on birth registration.
2. Handing-over the Srisaket network to concerned government agencies at the end of the project.
3. Children, youth and their parents have better knowledge of their rights and duties and equally, village committees have (to varying degrees) been interested and actively contributing to sharing information about child rights and child protection.
4. The project has seen an increase in birth registration acquisition.
5. Through the OSCC many children have been assisted in accessing the right care to better their lives.

SUCCESS Story from Chiang Rai: a boy was once addicting to drug and denied anything offered to his live but when he received supports from one organization (such as training and capacity and skill development) and the society gave him opportunity, he became another person. Now, he is more socialized, participation with other people and has positive attitude. He becomes a core youth group leader to provide surveillance of child protection in the community. He devotes his live to safe and helps other children in suffer.

6. On a national level, Plan has successfully contributed to the development of a child helpline. Children have been encouraged to take part in every step of the production of child helpline promotion materials.
7. Children learned to produce short films to reflect situations in their communities and these short films are well-received by their communities, schools and other non-target districts. Additionally, these materials are helping in creating awareness about the project, reporting mechanism to relevant government agencies, especially the hotline of the Ministry of Public Health and Ministry of Social Development and Human Security.
8. Communities set their own rules/ acceptable and unacceptable behaviours and have their own way of punishment. There are local rules set further from the national laws to prevent the violation of rights in term of abuse.
9. There is a space for children to share their ideas and opinions. The trained youths were able to conduct training sessions about the violation of right and abuse for community members. They have knowledge and to know how to prevent themselves.
10. The communities are more aware of child protection issues and various forms of violence and are able to take actions such as referring cases, asking or providing initial support.
11. Knowledge about Child Rights provided in the communities through general volunteer, NGOs, parents and volunteer mothers and through medias
12. Community organized children days and camps for children protection; Sport helps to get community members together and create unity amongst community members

Significant challenges faced, including ethical issues and key gaps

1. Research in target communities found that only 9% of the target population knew how to report child abuse cases; Levels of understanding of new child protection laws and putting them into practice are still challenges for both authorities and as such, limits civilians accessing them. Therefore, it is important to create better awareness and understanding of child protection.
2. The village level child protection system needs more attention to ensure child protection is seen as a communal responsibility and that children can no longer silently face abuse in and outside their homes.
3. Whilst the multi disciplinary network works to the network's advantage, it also results in splintered rather than complementary responses and sometimes to no response at all. In addition, There is inadequate budget support for child protection activities from the local government.
4. Frequent change of management-level officials, inadequate resources, and lack of public understanding of child protection mechanism all contribute to the unsatisfactory delivery of child protection services. For example, an overlap between One Stop Crisis Centre (OSCC)

located at provincial hospitals and the child protection committee at the provincial Social Development and Human Security Office and separated reporting channels of various agencies which do not have a synchronized system and information pose obstacles not only to victims of violence, but also to government officials themselves. This is related to the perceived ineffective law enforcement or negligence of governmental offices to child protection., especially in relation to reaching out to community level.

5. The limited role children play in the child protection network. Much more can be done to include children in all stages of the work on local and district levels. The situational analysis conducted by children in the community should be shared with related public and private agencies in the regional/provincial levels as well as local administrative organization for future work process design for different contexts, planning, implementation and participatory evaluation.
6. Project management should be decentralized to the sub-district level to allow flexibility in developing implementation plans for each location.
7. Plan and related committees, along with the OSCC should take part in knowledge management and sharing, following up, providing support and conducting internal evaluations as a learning network rather than project manager.
8. Networks of organizations working on child-related issues should be established to help analyze child protection situations, issues and changes in the community, regional and national levels to support the provincial governmental child protection system, where necessary.
9. Language barrier between agencies and the highlander population that Plan Thailand works with in Chiang Rai and Chiang Mai provinces, prevent proper communication and follow up.
10. Reported by villagers in Chiang Mai: Village leaders do not cooperate in child protection issues while community members are not interesting in setting up village committee. Children and youths do not realize the importance of children rights; Adults are not supportive and do not allow children / youths to work on children's issues.
11. Threats from human traffickers and those involved in sexual and commercial exploitation of children has caused some communities to stop certain awareness and rescue campaigns. Communities need to be strengthened to deal with these threats in close cooperation with police and judicial authorities.

Ethical challenges

12. Thai culture ascribes more power to adults including always being right. Children and youth should listen and respect adults' views and not challenge those. More training and behaviour change activities should be organized on the village level to change this concept, which will take considerable time.
13. Lack of accountability taken by government agencies in regard to child protection, because of the way they prioritize their work and responsibilities. In addition, some governmental or village leaders misuse their power, breaching children's rights. The attitude of governmental officials (in the hospital and OSCC staff) prevents taking cases further through the referral system.
14. Reported through the H-assessment: When it comes to a case to OSCC, it ends up with negotiation by the adults rather than going to the legal process or consulting with children.

EXAMPLES of CHALLENGES

Chiang Rai "The challenge is that there seems no justice when the issues related to power people. There was a case of child abuse allegedly committed by one of the government official. Even this case was brought to court but dismissed. It was found out later that there was a threat to the witness and this child's parents. He used his power to influence the village head to negotiate and threat not to help with acquiring the identify card."

A Chiang Rai service provider “spent both her personal and office hour time to take care and ensure the safety of the girl, her parents and her child. It’s a sensitive issue to handle against the culture and discrimination. There was a case of a teenage girl student who became pregnant. She had to hide this story from her parents and family because she was afraid that they could not accept this. One of One Stop Crisis Centre (OSCC), received this case and provided the consultation to her. Her friends were very supportive to help her everything. However, this fact came to her mother’s ear. It was definitely unacceptable to them at the beginning. It took for a while for the mother to come and talk to this girl. OSCC staff spent a lot of time and closely monitored this case to provide physical and mental support to her and her family members. Now this girl has given birth but still she stays with her friend’s house. Her parents requested a couple of months to take this thing and will take her and her kid back home later.”

Ideas for improvement from the H-assessments conducted by CBCP groups and Plan and its partners

1. To promote more child participation in every process, including planning, listen to their opinions, allow them to be a facilitator and give them feedbacks
 2. Integrate child protection activities into national system ensuring government support to community activities related to child protection; Local government should support activities related to children or encourage for setting up children/youth group or give awards for example for the best community or child.
 3. Improve coordination amongst multi-disciplinary team and local organizations such as referring case with the help from local organization, health centre, provincial hospitals.
 4. To organize youth camps for anti-drug session and to understand about sexuality, in which the youths can expand the idea to community members.
 5. Provide training to parents how to grow children up with love while children are trained to know their duties and disciplines
 6. To raise awareness about the local law and policies that people can take any actions when they come across any situations they can do such as domestic violence
 7. To strengthen M&E system in the community to follow up the progress
 8. Have a specific meeting in the community only for children issues
 9. Develop user friendly tools to use in the communities
 10. Identify specific roles of parents and village leaders in relation to child protection
 11. Setting up network for child protection and linking them at all level from village to sub-district, district and provincial levels
 12. Integrate child protection in school curriculum
 13. Provide more training for community members about child rights and setting up a village group to take responsibility on this.
- Setting up community police to monitor the situation

Annex I – training overview table

| Year of training: | Name of training (main subject): | Who was included: | Who facilitated: | Was there a follow up training? |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| 2011 | Protection skills and cases referral mechanisms | Children and adolescents 100 plus | Plan / Plan partner | |
| 2011 | Law clinic and birth registration | Children and adolescents | Plan / Partner | Yes |
| 2011 | ICT curriculum workshop | Children / adolescents / parents | Plan / Partners | Yes |
| 2007 | Programme on Child Rights Protection in Highland area | Children | Plan | |
| 2007 | Programme on Building knowledge and understanding of people on Child Rights Protection in Highland area | children | Plan | |
| 2007 | Programme on setting up a Network Of Child Rights Ambassador To campaign for protection and against child rights violation | children | Plan | yes |
| 2006-2009 | Capacity building for Child Protection from violence and violation of child rights | children | Plan | continuous |