

## Report on Community Based Child Protection Systems supported by Plan in Vietnam



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## Table of Contents:

	<b>Section of Report:</b>	<b>Page:</b>
I.	Executive Summary	3
II.	Introduction	5
III.	Methodology	5
IV.	Introduction to country context	7
V.	Overview of Plan's strategic child protection work and the scope of community based child protection systems (CBCPS) work	9
VI.	Structural aspects of CBCPS	10
VII.	Functional aspects of CBCPS	12
VIII.	Case management	15
IX.	Children's participation and involvement in CBCPS	18
X.	Capacity and support systems	21
XI.	Linkages with civil society and Government	23
XII.	Monitoring and evaluation system and process	26
XIII.	Sustainability and scale-up	27
XIV.	Key achievements, challenges and lessons learned	30
XV.	Conclusion	34
	<b>Annexes</b>	
	1. Schedule for Field Visit in Vietnam for the Regional Study on CBCPSs	37
	2. Stakeholders involved in CBCPS study in Vietnam, May 2012	42
	3. Methodology used during field visits with CBCPS members, children, parents/ caregivers, government officials and other stakeholders	43
	4. Ethical guidelines	63
	5. Child/ user friendly information	66
	6. Overview of training provided as part of CBCPS efforts, Plan in Vietnam	68

## I. Executive summary

This report provides an overview of community based child protection systems supported by Plan Vietnam, as a contribution to a regional comparative analysis on community based child protection mechanisms supported by Plan in the Asia region. The overall objective of this comparative analysis is to increase learning of various structural and functional aspects of the existing community based child protection mechanisms supported by Plan Asia across 13 countries, and to report on their potential for increased impact and sustainability. An eight day field study was undertaken in Vietnam in May 2012. 99 stakeholders (30 men, 39 women, 13 boys and 17 girls) including members of commune Child Protection Boards, village collaborators, children's core group members, Plan staff, and government officials (local, district, provincial and central level) were actively involved in Focus Group discussions, interviews and/or participatory tools to share their views, experiences and perspectives on the community based child protection mechanisms.

Through inter-agency collaborations and a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Labour Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA), UNICEF, Plan in Vietnam, Save the Children in Vietnam, Child Fund and World Vision the community based child protection system has been piloted and implemented in 15 provinces since August 2009. Plan in collaboration with the Department of Protection and Care for Children and DoLISA has directly piloted the CBCPS in 27 communes (82% rural, 18% urban) in three provinces: Ha Noi, Phu Tho (in North), and Quang Tri (in Central Vietnam) from 2009 - 2011. In the next 3 years (2012 – 2015) both as part of Government scale up plans, and as part of internal efforts, efforts are underway by Plan to scale up CBCPS in 7 provinces where Plan has programme units in Phu Tho, Thai Nguyen, Hanoi, Bac Giang, Quang Binh, Quang Tri, and Quang Ngai provinces. These provinces are mainly poor mountainous areas with high percentage of ethnic minority groups.

At the commune level the main community based child protection structures are the Commune Child Protection Board (involving local government officials and members of mass organisations), the network of village collaborators (adults) and Children's Core Groups. In some areas, a village level child protection board and village level children's core groups have also been formed. Child Protection Boards/ Committees established at the district and provincial levels are also supported by inter-agency working groups which involve technical advisers and government officers who have more time to support the implementation of action plans on child protection.

The purpose of the community based child protection system in Vietnam is: to support prevention work and early intervention with children, families and schools in the community to reduce child protection violations, and to provide child protection services to children who face neglect, abuse, violence or exploitation; to mobilize resources from the community, government, and informal sector to prevent and respond to child protection; and to coordinate the efforts of local authorities, relevant agencies, mass organizations, social organizations, NGOs, community and families to care for and protect children.

The development of community based child protection systems has been strategically approached and established in the Vietnamese context through close collaboration by Plan with the Government, UNICEF and other international agencies. In 2011 inter-agency advocacy for the National Programme on Child Protection was approved by the Prime Minister with a budget of \$84 million for the next 5 years. The national programme includes scale up of CBCPS in 30 (out of the 62) Provinces in the next 5 years (reaching 50% of communes). Thus, there is a lot to learn from good practice developments on community based child protection systems in Vietnam; and as in all contexts there are components that need strengthening to increase realisation of children's protection rights.

*Key lessons learned:*

- Government ownership and leadership by the Department of Protection and Care for Children, MoLISA and DoLISA at different levels has been key to sustainability and scale up of CBCPS. Inter-agency advocacy, technical support and piloting have been effective.
- Involvement of the People's Committee has been crucial at commune, district and provincial levels as they have more power to engage other government agency leaders in the Child Protection Board to work collaboratively with DoLISA officials.
- Awareness raising on child rights and child protection is essential to prepare the ground for effective community based child protection systems. Good parenting forums and positive discipline training with mothers, fathers and caregivers has improved communication and understanding among children and their parents; and has helped create a more conducive environment for broader community based work on child protection.
- Encouraging villagers and members of mass organisations to develop Village Codes is effective in establishing good parenting and community practices which contribute to children's care and protection. Efforts to support villages in developing Village Codes should be scaled up; and increased efforts can be made to understand and build upon positive traditional practices that enhance children's care and protection especially in ethnic minority areas.
- Children's core group members have increased confidence and life skills, and there is increased value for children's participation among parents, village elders and government officials (at different levels). However, increased efforts are needed to reach and empower the most marginalised children; and increased attention is needed to plan Child Protection Board meetings and trainings for children at times that do not clash with their studies.
- Child protection case management is in its early stages of development. There still appears to be reluctance among children, parents and other community members to report cases of child sexual abuse, early marriage and harmful child work. Increased training of village collaborators and commune child protection officers is needed on social work skills, case management and referrals especially for sensitive cases such as child sexual abuse, and children in conflict with the law.
- Need to advocate for sufficient local government budget allocations to pay for a dedicated child protection officer at the commune level; and increased stipends to enable village collaborators to focus on child protection at the village level. The People's Committees at provincial and district level should be encouraged to develop child protection plans and budget allocations.
- Networking and exchange visits among children's core groups and village collaborators can also be supported to increase replication of good practices and joint problem solving.
- The child protection data base and monitoring and evaluation system is in its early stages of development and needs to be strengthened, as child protection data collection (disaggregated by gender, ethnicity, age and other factors) can inform more effective child protection planning for appropriate child protection services, laws and policies.
- Greater efforts are needed to engage civil society organisations in the child protection system in the Vietnamese context, and to strengthen and develop referral to child friendly child protection services that support children's recovery and reintegration if they have faced abuse, violence, neglect or exploitation.
- Increased inter-sector collaboration is needed within Plan to enhance the linkages between the parenting initiatives supported by the child protection and ECCD programme; and to ensure emergency preparedness and risk reduction that enhances child protection in emergencies.

## II. Introduction

Plan is as 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 years<sup>1</sup> 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 report provides an overview of community based child protection systems supported by Plan Vietnam, as a contribution to a regional comparative analysis on community based child protection mechanisms supported by Plan in the Asia region<sup>2</sup>. 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; and
- to provide a broad overview of lessons learned on key components and processes contributing towards effective child protection and sustainable community based mechanisms.

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<sup>1</sup> particularly since 2006

<sup>2</sup> 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.

### III. Methodology:

The comparative analysis study has been carried out by a consultancy group<sup>3</sup> 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*)

For each of the country studies, eight days of field work were undertaken. Core research tools used during each of field study visits<sup>4</sup> included:

- Interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with Plan staff and partners who are actively engaged in CBCPM work
- FGDs and use of participatory tools with members of CBCP committees/ groups
- Participatory tools with children and young people's representatives (especially with those who are actively engaged in community based child protection activities either through their child groups/ councils and/or through children's representation in the CBCPMs).
- Observation in the community and interviews with parents/ caregivers and village heads.
- Interviews with local officials, and if possible with district and/or national officials.
- Interviews of FGD with other agencies supporting child protection system strengthening.

The field visit schedule for Vietnam<sup>5</sup> was adapted to the local context, taking into consideration the time availability for a one day consultation workshop (on a non-school day) bringing together representatives from CBCPS - members of commune Child Protection Boards, volunteer collaborators and children's core group representatives from 3 communes in Quang Tri Province. Outreach visits and consultation meetings were organised with members of the CBCPS in an additional two communes (one in the lowlands, and one in mountainous ethnic minority areas) in the same province; and meetings were organised with concerned district and provincial level officials from the Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (DoLISA). In addition, a Focus Group Discussion was organised with central level government officials from the Department of Protection and Care for Children, and with staff from other concerned agencies in Hanoi. Plan staff members from child protection, education, disaster risk management sectors and from senior management were also interviewed. Overall 99 stakeholders in Vietnam<sup>6</sup> – 69 adults (30 men, 39 women) and 30 children (13 boys and 17 girls aged 10 - 18 years) were actively involved in Focus Group discussions, interviews and/or participatory tools to share their views, experiences and perspectives on the community based child protection mechanisms.

The participatory research tools used with children and adults during the one day workshop and/or the outreach commune level consultations<sup>7</sup> included:

- visual mapping of protection issues affecting girls and boys in their commune (from girls, boys, women and men's perspectives);
- time line by actors involved in the community based child protection system to identify key achievements and challenges faced over time in community based child protection work;

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<sup>3</sup> ICPREC – International Child Protection Rights and Evaluation Consultants led by Claire O'Kane and Kunera Moore. Claire O'Kane undertook the field study in Vietnam.

<sup>4</sup> See Annex 3: Methodology used during field visits with CBCPM members, children, parents/ caregivers, government officials and other stakeholders

<sup>5</sup> See Annex 1: Schedule for Field Visit Schedule in Vietnam

<sup>6</sup> See Annex 2: Stakeholders involved in CBCPM study in Vietnam, *May 2012*

<sup>7</sup> See Annex 3



- venn mapping of community based child protection mechanisms and their links to other structures enabling referral and support (from girls and boys, village collaborators and local government officials/ Child Protection board members perspectives);
- response pathway exploring how CP risks/ concerns are identified through CBCPSs and what happens next;
- body mapping (before and after) to explore the outcomes of community based child protection on girls and boys lives;
- 'H' assessments of the strengths/ achievements, weaknesses/ challenges faced in their CBCPS and their recommendations to strengthen the CBCPS.
- Drawings by children of their protection issues and/or how they are solved through CBCPS.
- Interviews with parents/ caregivers and village heads;
- Stories of Most Significant Change to share case stories that illustrate the achievements of their CBCPS.

The participatory tools were effective in enabling girls, boys, village collaborators (mostly women) and the local officials who were members of the commune child protection boards to reflect, analyse and share their views, experiences, insights and lessons learned on the community based child protection systems. Focus group discussions and interviews with officials at district, provincial and national level were also highly informative enabling better understanding of the systems approach in Vietnam, in particular how national efforts (undertaken by the Department of Protection and Care for Children with inter-agency support) are enabling policy and programming developments which support the piloting and scale up of community based child protection systems.



Ethical guidelines<sup>8</sup> 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.

#### IV. Introduction to the Country Context:

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam is a single party state, and its constitution asserts the central role of the Community Party of Vietnam. Vietnam has achieved remarkable progress over the last 20 years. Fuelled by the adoption of economic reforms since 1986, the cessation of hostilities in 1988, and the lifting of the international trade embargo in 1994, foreign trade and foreign direct investment have flourished leading Vietnam to become one of the fastest growing economies in the world. The shift away from a centrally planned economy to a market-oriented economic model has significantly improved the quality of life for many Vietnamese. Income has risen from US\$220 in 2002 to US\$1,052 in 2009, and the percentage of the population living in poverty has fallen from 58% in 1993

<sup>8</sup> See Annex 4: Ethical guidelines, and Annex: 5 Child/ user friendly information on the field visits.

to 10% in 2010<sup>9</sup>. The situation for children has followed a similar pattern with reductions in infant mortality, increases in school enrolment, and improved food and economic security<sup>10</sup>. By most accounts, Vietnam will achieve almost all of its MDG targets by 2015.

Despite the remarkable progress that Vietnam has made, there are still significant gaps in Vietnam's development. At the macroeconomic level, the Government has acknowledged that its current economic growth model is unsustainable. The country's rapid growth has created growing disparities in wealth with chronic poverty increasingly being concentrated in remote, mountainous areas of the country where the majority of ethnic minority populations reside. In these areas, ethnic minority children and their families still struggle for survival lacking food, water, access to social services and adequate livelihoods to lift them out of poverty. Vietnam's unbridled economic growth has also brought attention to the need to look at child poverty from a more holistic rights perspective. There is increased recognition that child poverty is not simply a question of raising incomes or ensuring access to schools and health clinics. The measurement of child poverty needs to incorporate more qualitative metrics and other components such as: social inclusion, protection, participation and even leisure. By viewing Vietnam's development from a more holistic rights perspective, it becomes apparent that child poverty in Vietnam today is much more prevalent and severe than is commonly believed<sup>11</sup>.

Physical punishment, emotional and sexual abuse and parental neglect are prevalent and appear to be rising with the erosion of traditional support systems. Child protection represents a threat to the majority of Vietnamese children today<sup>12</sup>. Physical punishment is considered culturally appropriate to instil discipline and obedience; and is thus frequently used both within the family and in schools, and emotional abuse appears to be increasing. Sexual abuse of children and sexual exploitation through prostitution and trafficking in children are also areas of concern. Parental neglect is another form of child abuse that seems to be on the rise as a result of increasing livelihood demands on parents and reportedly contributes to the high rate of child injury among children and adolescents aged 0-19 years<sup>13</sup>.

Cultural norms discourage Vietnamese children from expressing their views and give few chances for them to participate in a meaningful dialogue with adults and with other children on issues relating to the protection and promotion of their rights. Changes in public attitudes are also needed to reduce the unfair treatment of girls. This relates to the unfair distribution of the work burden and to the incidence of violence. There has been progressive and important government legislation to protect the rights of girls and women, but change will not come from legislation alone – it requires a transformation in attitudes, particularly within poorer communities.

For much of its history Vietnam has been a predominantly agricultural civilization based on wet rice cultivation. However, manufacturing, information technology and high industries now form a large and fast-growing part of the national economy; and patterns of urbanisation and rural – urban migration are increasing. Migrant children and youth are particularly at risk of exploitation and abuse, and are believed to contribute to the increasing number of street children and child sex workers. Some 15% of female sex workers are reported to be under the age of 18. Another vulnerable group is children in conflict with the law, including juvenile offenders in reform schools. National statistics

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<sup>9</sup> Socio-economic data in Vietnam tends to be subject to “achievement disease”, that is, reports regularly reflect a positive upward trend to demonstrate good governance. As such, all data needs to be considered with care. Vietnam's poverty rate tends to be understated as it has budget implications for the social welfare system. Report in Plan in Vietnam Country Strategic Plan CSP III (2011 – 2016)

<sup>10</sup> Plan in Vietnam Country Strategic Plan CSP III (2011 – 2016)

<sup>11</sup> Ibid

<sup>12</sup> Ibid

<sup>13</sup> Ibid



show that the number of crimes committed by juveniles is on the rise, and juvenile crimes have become increasingly serious. Children with disabilities are also vulnerable to harm and neglect<sup>14</sup>.

Vietnam is frequented by floods, cyclones, and droughts causing heavy economic and human losses every year. Vietnam is also one of the most vulnerable countries in East Asia to increases in the sea level due to climate change. In one scenario, estimates suggest that between 9.4 million to 22 million people may be severely impacted by climate change by a one meter rise in sea levels by 2100<sup>15</sup>. The capacity of local government in terms of disaster preparedness and early warning systems are still weak, and those most at risk generally have limited information and lack financial and technical support. To recover from disasters some households are forced to take their children out of school to help the family to earn an income. The loss of family members or family break-ups due to seasonal migration post disaster can also leave children vulnerable to abuse and exploitation.

Vietnam is in the initial stages of developing a child protection system to identify and support vulnerable children, especially through piloting of community based child protection systems. Support programmes to protect disadvantaged and abused children and to assist them in their reintegration with society are also being developed, but are currently limited. Vietnam lacks a qualified social work workforce, but has recently put into place to scale up training of social workers as an important profession to strengthen work with children, families and communities.

## **V. Overview of Plan's strategic child protection work and the scope of community based child protection system (CBCPS) work**

Plan has worked in Vietnam since 1993. The goal of Plan in Vietnam's Country Strategic Plan III 2011 – 2016 is that *"Children in Vietnam – especially the most vulnerable and marginalised – live in communities that increasingly respect and promote their rights, enabling them to actively and meaningfully participate in society"*. Plan's child protection programme 'Child Protection for All' ensuring the right to protection from harm and violence of all children, with a special focus on children in special circumstances is one of Plan Vietnam's three country programmes<sup>16</sup>. The goal of Plan's strategic work on child protection is that *'All children and youth in Vietnam better enjoy their rights to protection from all forms of abuse, exploitation and harmful practices'*. The programme will: scale up models for community-based child protection in communities; increase knowledge and awareness of children's rights; provide skills training and jobs placement for disadvantaged youth; increase reporting of child abuse cases; and, introduce child friendly police and judicial processes.

Plan has been implementing child protection programmes in Vietnam for 7 years, and has been supporting the establishment and strengthening of community based child protection systems since 2009. Plan International in Vietnam works closely with the Government authorities (Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs - MoLISA, in particular with the Department of Protection and Care for Children<sup>17</sup> at the national level, and with the Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (DoLISA) at national, provincial, district and commune levels as their main partner to establish and scale up *'an effective and gender sensitive Community Based Child Protection System'*. Plan has collaborated with the Department of Protection and Care for Children, UNICEF and other INGOs (Save the Children, Child Fund, and World Vision) to support piloting, lessons learned and scale up of community based child protection systems (CBCPSs) across urban and rural contexts. Plan has also made particular efforts to promote CBCPSs in regions where ethnic minority groups

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<sup>14</sup> Plan in Vietnam Country Strategic Plan CSP III (2011 – 2016)

<sup>15</sup> Ibid

<sup>16</sup> The other two main programmes are 1) Early Childhood Care and Development in Ethnic Minority Areas focusing on the right to survival and development of ethnic minority children; and 2) Child Centred Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change Adaptation.

<sup>17</sup> Formerly it was the National Commission for Population, Family and Children

are living; however, current expansion of CBCPSs mean that a broader range of communities and people will be reached which is line with their goal to protect all children.

The Country Programme supports local governments in the establishment and functioning of a community-based child protection system that can provide adequate response to the issues of child abuse, neglect, exploitation, crime, harmful practices and social exclusion. The systems intend to focus on the most marginalized children (children in special circumstances) and encompass prevention, mitigation and remediation components. Rather than focusing on specific child protection groups or issues such as child marriage, domestic violence or violence in schools, this approach allows Plan and its partners to take a more systematic and comprehensive approach to child protection. Active involvement of children to better protect themselves is demonstrated and advocated for as a key mechanism of the system approach.

*Programme strategies include: child centred community based interventions; and a systems driven approach to child protection. Child centred community based interventions give equal attention to developing the capacities of duty bearers (parents, caregivers and communities) and rights holders (children and youth) towards the realisation of their rights to protection from all forms of violence and abuse. Emerging issues like youth mobility and migration, early marriage, prevention of bullying or peer-to-peer violence etc., are integrated with the approach. A systems-driven and evidence-based approach to child protection includes both the development of the community based child protection system; and other child protection programme efforts to strengthen a child friendly juvenile justice system that are responsive to children's concerns; while also ensuring clear linkages with Vietnam's strategies on Child Protection for the period 2011 to 2016, as laid down in the National Plan of Action for Children (2011-2020).*

Plan in Vietnam's country programme on child protection has four approaches: awareness raising and behavioural change; institutional capacity building; evidence-based advocacy; and, service demonstration. The interventions are geared towards prevention, early intervention and the development of a minimum package of child protection services, supporting policies and laws, and the resources required for reaching out to the most vulnerable, socially-excluded (or 'invisible') groups of children.

Through inter-agency collaborations and a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between MOLISA, UNICEF, Plan in Vietnam, Save the Children in Vietnam and Child Fund the community based child protection system has been piloted and implemented in 15 provinces since August 2009<sup>18</sup>. Plan in collaboration with the Department of Protection and Care for Children and DoLISA has directly piloted the CBCPS in 27 communes (82% rural, 18% urban<sup>19</sup>) in three provinces: Ha Noi, Phu Tho (in North), and Quang Tri (in Central Vietnam) from 2009 - 2011. In the next 4 years (2012 – 2015) both as part of Government scale up plans, and as part of internal efforts, efforts are now underway for Plan to scale up CBCPMs in 7 provinces where Plan has programme units in Phu Tho, Thai Nguyen, Hanoi and Bac Giang in the North, and Quang Binh, Quang Tri, and Quang Ngai in Central provinces. These provinces are mainly poor mountainous areas with high percentage of ethnic minority groups.



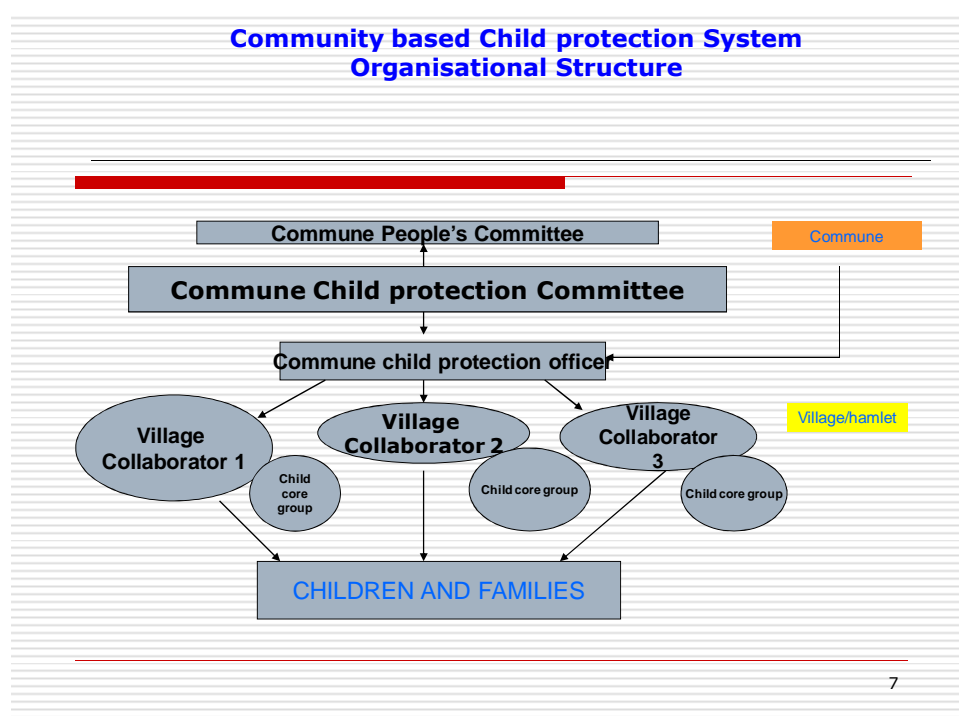
<sup>18</sup> and expanded to include World Vision since 2010

<sup>19</sup> From 2011, the CBCPS was piloted by Plan in Thanh Xuan urban communes in Hanoi province.

## VI. Structural aspects of CBCPSs

In Vietnam there is a clear focus on establishing community based child protection systems to ensure that the community based prevention and response efforts are integrated into wider child protection system building efforts at the commune, district, provincial and national levels. The commune is the lowest level of administration in the Vietnamese system – with government duty bearers who are part of the ‘Commune People’s Committee’. Within one commune there are usually 10 – 15 villages or hamlets<sup>20</sup>.

At the commune level the main community based child protection structures are the **Commune Child Protection Board/ Committee**, the **network of village collaborators** (adults) and **Children’s Core Groups** (sometimes also known as child collaborators). In some areas, a village level child protection board and village level children’s core groups have also been formed.



In line with the MoU between the Department of Protection and Care for Children, UNICEF and other INGOs, Plan has collaborated with the Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (DoLISA) at the Provincial and District levels in order to establish the Commune Child Protection Boards. In collaboration with DoLISA Plan Vietnam organizes district level workshops to raise awareness on the importance of child rights and child protection, and the purpose and roles of establishing Child Protection Boards/ Committees at the district and commune levels. District level officials from DoLISA, the Department of Education and Training (DoET), the Department of Justice (DoJ), the Department of Health (DoH), the Police, and People’s Committee members are also involved in these workshops. The Commune/ Ward People’s Committee is requested to support the establishment and management of the Commune Child Protection Committee with membership from local relevant agencies and mass organisations. The chairperson or Vice Chairperson of the People’s Committee is encouraged to become the Chairperson of the Commune Child Protection Committee.

<sup>20</sup> The total population of a rural commune in Vietnam is about 4000 – 6000. Thus, the Vietnamese commune may itself be comparable to a ‘village’ in other country contexts.

The Commune Child Protection Boards include 7 – 10 official members including: the Chairman/Vice chairman of Commune's People Committee, Child Protection Officer (or equivalent staff member from DoLiSA), the judicial officer, Head of Primary and/or Secondary school, Leader of Women's Union, Leader of Youth Union, Police official, Health official and the head of other mass organizations in the commune. Village collaborators (usually 10 – 15 per commune) and children from the commune level children's core group also join Commune Child Protection Board meetings.

As the Commune Child Protection Board members are local government staff and mass organization leaders there is no rotation of membership, unless someone else takes on an official role. The guideline for selection of CBCPS members have been developed by the Department of Protection and Care for Children together with UNICEF, Plan, Save the Children and other agencies. However, while initial guidance suggested to include the commune health officer, and leaders of the Fatherhood front and Red Cross as board members, more recent guidance received from the Department of Protection and Care for Children in 2011 suggested that these representatives were not required to be regular CP Board members for monthly meetings, but could be referred to for their support as and when required.

Each village has one or two village collaborators (usually women), depending on the size of their village. They form a network of village collaborators at the commune level to support each other in the community based child protection work, and they work closely with the commune child protection officer (local government official). Many of the village collaborators are existing 'village collaborators' supporting information gathering and awareness raising on topics relating to maternal health, immunization and population, in addition to child welfare and protection<sup>21</sup>.

At the commune level a children's core group is also formed bringing together 12 – 30 children (1- 2 children's representatives from each village in the commune). The children tend to be aged 13 – 16 years (girls and boys) who are attending secondary school. They are usually nominated by their teachers as children who have courage to speak up.

The Commune Child Protection Board usually organizes monthly meetings involving the Board members, village collaborators and representatives of children's core group members. The village collaborators also organize their own additional meetings together with the commune child protection officer when they need support or advice.

The Child Protection Boards/ Committees at the district and provincial levels involve leaders of relevant Government departments and other concerned agencies. The Board is supported by inter-agency working groups which involve technical advisers and lower level government officers who have more time to support the implementation and monitoring of child protection plans. At the district and provincial level Child Protection Board meetings are supposed to be organized every 3 months, however, there is more of a tendency for the inter-agency working groups to organize meetings as and when support is needed to respond to particularly cases.

## **VII. Functional aspects of CBCPSs**

The purpose of the community based child protection system in Vietnam is to:

- Support prevention work and early intervention with children, families and schools in the community to reduce child protection violations, and to provide child protection services to children who face neglect, abuse, violence or exploitation;
- Mobilize resources from the community, government, and informal sector to prevent and respond to child protection; and

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<sup>21</sup> Some of the village collaborator have experience supporting work related to the former committee for Population, Family and Children.

- Coordinate the efforts of local authorities, relevant agencies, mass organizations, social organizations, NGOs, community and families to care for and protect children.

More specific objectives of the CBCPS are to:

- Support families and communities to care for and protect children
- Empower children so they can protect themselves better
- Address risks which harm children
- Rehabilitate child victims of abuse, harm or exploitation; and to support their reintegration in families and communities

Through the work of village collaborators, children's core group members and members of the Commune Child Protection Boards there is a strong focus on prevention work through parenting education and awareness raising on child rights and child protection; and on information gathering concerning children, especially on registering and responding to vulnerable children/ children in need of special protection<sup>22</sup> and children at risk. In accordance with government policies specific groups of vulnerable children are supported to access social protection schemes that concern them. In addition, early interventions (including home visits and parental guidance) are undertaken with children and families at risk (e.g. children living with parents who regularly abuse alcohol) to reduce vulnerabilities and risks of protection violations. Monitoring, identification and response to child protection concerns in families, schools and communities are also supported through the CBCPS.

The village collaborators play a role in supporting primary services for all children, secondary services for children at risk, and tertiary services for children who have faced abuse or exploitation.



In terms of *primary services* they play role:

- to gather and record data on children in the village;
- to organise communication activities to raise community awareness on child right promotion, birth registration, child abuse prevention, and positive parenting education;
- to support the children's core groups and activities with children and young people including life skills education and children's role in prevention, monitoring and response to child protection concerns;
- to support community initiatives which help develop child friendly environments;
- to enhance family capacity through parenting education program and to communicate and advocate with family members on education, primary health care programs, nutrition, sanitation and support families to address the needs of child protection.

*We communicate on CRC and parenting skills to help prevent violence against children. We have used drama and theatre for development to show real case examples of beating children and more positive discipline methods. Such methods are effective. (village collaborators, Dakrong commune)*

*We share reports with the Child Protection Board on which children are vulnerable, the risks they face, and cases of child abuse (e.g. domestic violence, fighting among children). We have found that overall it is better to have prevention. (village collaborator, Dakrong commune)*

<sup>22</sup> Under the 2004 law of child protection, care and education the Vietnam government defines ten categories of disadvantaged children including: orphans having no one to rely on, abandoned children; defective and disabled children; children being victims of toxic chemicals; children infected with HIV/AIDS; children doing hard or hazardous jobs or contacting noxious substances; children working far from their families; street children; sexually-abused children; children addicted to narcotics and juvenile offenders.



In terms of *secondary services the village collaborators*: Identify groups of children at high risk; assess the risks of child abuse and the needs of children at risk; develop and implement plans to support children and their family (e.g. home visits, parenting guidance), including referral to relevant services (where-ever needed) to reduce the risks and the impacts on children (e.g. referrals for scholarships for poor children, income generation for poor families, drug/ alcohol detoxification for parents, etc). In particular the volunteer collaboration can provide information to families on relevant social welfare policies and cash grants or other benefits that vulnerable children may be eligible for.

For *tertiary services*, in situations where they identify a child who has experienced abuse or exploitation they may conduct initial assessments of child and family situation, and often in collaboration with (and technical advice from) the commune child protection officer and other child protection board members will contribute to the development of individual case plan to support the child and the family, to access resources that support child care and protection in their best interests. Where-ever necessary referrals to relevant child protection, psychosocial, health, legal or other services will be made. Where-ever necessary the volunteer collaborator will also work with the police and the local authorities and in cases of child sexual abuse or other extreme abuse or neglect cases the commune police officer will inform the district level police department. They also support children who are victims of abuse or exploitation to rehabilitate and have a normal life.

As there is currently no cadre who is totally responsible for child protection at the commune level, Plan Vietnam is advocating for the government to allocate for one person just for child protection. In the meantime in communes where the community based child protection system is being piloted Plan/ other implementing agencies have negotiated with DoLISA to call the commune level DoLISA officer a child protection officer, rather than a DoLISA officer – so that their roles and responsibilities for children’s protection are emphasised. However, while their name reflects their important focus on and responsibilities for child protection, they continue to have other roles and responsibilities concerning invalids, people with disabilities, war veterans and other vulnerable groups as DoLISA officers. The *commune child protection officer* plays a crucial role in monitoring, supervising and supporting the village collaborators, receiving information concerning vulnerable children, children at risk and children who have experienced abuse, and they ensure appropriate actions by the commune Child Protection Board. They share information on the social welfare policies for children, especially children in difficult circumstances; and advise the Child Protection Board members on case management plans in the best interest of the child. They act as the focal points for child protection service delivery in the community, case management, handling and referral children to local services to address children’s needs in coordination with the head of the commune Child Protection Board. In sensitive child protection cases (e.g. child sexual abuse, serious abuse or neglect) they are involved in risk assessments and investigations working with the police where laws have been violated and child protection case management.



The role of the *chairperson/ vice chair of the child protection board at commune/ ward level* (who is also a chair or vice-chair of the Commune People’s Committee) is to: provide instructions, coordination and mobilization of resources for child protection; to instruct and supervise the enforcement of the law and programs intended for child protection; to co-ordinate with competent agencies such as police, justice, DOLISA sub-office to provide special services for children in need of special protection; and to support investigations into child abuse cases.



Each of the Commune Child Protection Board members have roles and responsibilities which relate to their official government role (as an administrator, education, judicial, health or other official), as illustrated by the quotes below:

*As a judicial officer my main responsibility is to communicate with the community about the laws and policies.*

*When I became a member of the Child Protection Board I learned more about child protection laws and policies and how to implement them to better protect children. I also report to the CP Board on cases that I know about, so that we can collectively discuss how to find solutions and how to prevent children from risks and social evils (e.g. fighting). (male judicial officer/ CP Board member, Vinh Long Commune)*

*Through our regular CP Board meetings, communication sessions, good parenting forum and training of adolescents we Youth Union members take part in a lot of child protection activities. We also join the village collaborators meeting when they share their updates and we provide advice to the Child Protection Board on how to address concerns. We also directly support children and encourage their direct participation and communication. (Youth Union secretary/ CP Board member, Vinh Long Commune)*

The district and provincial level Child Protection Boards (which are established and operating under the leadership of the District/Provincial People's Committees) are: responsible for instructing, coordinating and mobilizing resources for child protection among police, education, health, women's union and other organizations. The district (and provincial level child protection boards) are supported by *inter-agency working groups* with technical members who have more time than the government department leaders to engage in action planning and referrals on child protection.

Furthermore, the district level DoLISA officers play an important role in coordinating with, supervising and providing technical support to the commune level child protection officers to manage any serious child protection cases including: sexual abuse; serious abuse, neglect or exploitation; or children in conflict with the law. They support case management, including initial assessments and investigations, development of case plans, and coordination for referral to other relevant services. District level DoLISA officers also support broader training programs on child protection for child protection officers, collaborators and child protection board members; and provide advice and support the People's Committees and Child Protection Boards to develop sectoral plans on child protection.

At the provincial level DoLISA is responsible to: develop the provincial child protection programme with budget and human resource allocations; procedures for child protection of the city/province; to train staff on child protection; to coordinate and provide professional protection services (such as counselling, alternative care, referrals to justice services etc); to conduct studies on child protection concerns; and to provide technical advice, recommendation to provincial People's Committee and Child Protection Board on child protection.

Plan's role through a small team of child protection staff in the Programme Unit and in the country office is to: advocate with the local authorities (at different levels) to support the Child Protection Boards/ Committees, village collaborators and children's core groups; to influence policies, laws, guidelines that strengthen the child protection system (at all levels); and to provide technical support and training on such topics as child rights, child protection, children's participation, case management, and life skills, etc.

## **VIII. Case management:**

Through the CBCPS child protection concerns are most often observed or brought to the attention of the village collaborators and the children's core group members. Parents, caregivers, or teachers may observe child protection concerns and share their concerns with the village collaborator and/or to other Child Protection board members. Also, the children's core group members often identify

concerns through their discussions with group members and through observation; and they usually share such concerns with the village collaborators, or members of the Child Protection Boards.

*Within the community people are more open to report child protection concerns. In the past they may have known about issues, but they did not report them. Especially through some from the children's core group we get regular updates on children's situation (commune child protection officer).*

*When we face troubles we will share them with our parents, teacher, the village collaborators, or a member of the Child Protection board. For example if a child has dropped out of school we report our concern to the village collaborator. The village collaborator will visit the child's home to listen to the views of the child and their parents (or other family members) to analyse and better understand their situation and to encourage them to keep the child in school. They will explain the importance of education and will provide practical advice to overcome the challenges faced. (Children's core group representatives)*

The main protection concerns being identified and addressed through the community based child protection system vary in different geographic project areas. For example, in lowland areas there were specific concerns regarding children's involvement in online games which was contributing to truancy from school and school dropout. In the mountainous ethnic minority areas there were increased concerns about neglect of children who were left at home alone while their parents went out to work. In urban centres there were increased concerns regarding street children, and different forms of abuse (physical, sexual, and emotional) and exploitation facing domestic child workers and other working children.

**Responding to school drop out to play online games, Ving Long Commune:** In October 2011 a 14 year old boy studying in grade 8 dropped out of school to play online games. A girl from his class noticed that the boy had stopped coming to school and she informed the village collaborator. The village collaborator met with the boy and his family to discuss the concern and to try to encourage the boy to return to school. However, the boy was not convinced. Thus, the village collaborator shared her concern with the Child Protection Board who discussed how to solve the case. A Child Protection Board member and the Village Collaborator worked together with members of the child group to try to encourage the boy to return to school. They met the boy at his home and explained more about child rights, children's duties and the benefits of education. They convinced him about the importance of education and they also encouraged the boy's parents to show him more care and support, to listen to him and to respond to his concerns. The boy agreed to return to school. He is still studying and has stopped playing online games.



Common protection concerns faced by girls and boys which are being identified, prevented and addressed through the CBCPS include: violence in families (beating and other forms of harmful punishment); school dropout; harmful child work; neglect, accidents and drowning. Family based care and protection of children, including support to children living with their grandparents have also been supported.

**Addressing lack of care and family separation, Vinh Chap CP Board members and Village Collaborator:** One day in February 2012 a village collaborator was approached in the local market place and informed that a woman had brought a 6 month infant boy to the market to sell. The village collaborator met with the woman and the infant named B who was her grandchild. The crowd were gathering to discuss the situation. The village collaborator immediately phoned the

commune child protection officer to share the concern; as well as the District Child Protection Officer to request her support. The DoLISA officer advised the village collaborator to contact the market security staff to try to keep the grandmother and the boy until the child protection officer or Child Protection board members arrived. After a while the child protection officer and other members of the CP board including the People's Committee representative arrived at the market. They asked the maternal grandmother about the situation. The boy's parents were struggling economically and the father was from a different area. Both the infants parents had left to work away from home and had left the infant in the maternal grandparents care. However, the grandfather didn't want to bring up the boy, so the grandmother tried to give the child away to someone who could care for him. The board members asked the grandmother if there were any relatives who could take care of the infant. They identified another aunt who could be willing to take care of the child. The board members approached the aunt and she took the infant. However, after 3 days she shared that she was unable to take care of the infant. So the Child Protection Board and the village collaborators discussed the case together. One of the village collaborators agreed to take temporary care of the infant. The Child Protection Board also identified economic and social support through inter-agency support from mass organisations (from Women's Union, fatherland front). The Child Protection Board also tried to make contact with the boy's mother. The mother and father came back and agreed to take care of their child and they returned to their working place with their child.

In some areas, adults use of alcohol has increased domestic violence, thus such concerns are being addressed through the CBCPS.

**Responding to domestic violence, Dakrong commune:** There was a household where the man regularly drank alcohol and he used to beat his wife and children (3 girls and 1 boys aged 2-7 years). The village Child Protection Board members talked with him, but he did not change his behaviour. Thus, the situation was reported to the commune Child Protection Board. Commune CP board members (including the commune policeman) came to talk with the man. The policeman explained the Village Code that had been developed by the village people, and explained that his behaviour violated the village code and violated child rights. He explained that if he continued to beat his children and wife he would be taken to court. As a result of this discussion the man changed his behaviour.

In some project areas reports concerning early child marriage, child sexual abuse, and children in conflict with the law are also beginning to emerge. However, in many areas under-reporting on child sexual abuse, early marriage, harmful child work, discrimination in schools and emotional abuse within families remains due to existing socio-cultural traditions, and/or in the case of child sexual abuse secrecy is maintained due to shame.

*Girls aged 15-17 years may marry boys age 18 years. There is a lack of knowledge on the laws relating to marriage. As the children do not have much information and do not have much to do in the village they may decide to get married. Also following flirting some adolescents are excited to get married. Sometimes the marriage takes place, but the marriage is not registered with the People's committee till a much later date when the girl is 18 years. (girl core group member, Dakrong Commune)*

Children's core group members find it difficult to report on child labour when they know that a child is compelled to earn a living to support their families' livelihood. Village collaborators, Child Protection Board members and other government officials also mentioned the challenges involved in addressing child neglect and protection concerns that were rooted in family poverty. Increased social protection schemes are needed to support these vulnerable families.

*Some problems like children working to earn money does not seem to concern us as due to their families low income they have to work to support their family. It happens a lot here. (children's core group representatives, Dakrong Commune)*

*Poverty and economic struggles of families are a constraint and contribute to the situation where children are working to contribute to the families income. When working they face increased risks of abuse and exploitation. In poor families they face hard choices due to economic pressure.*  
(Department of Protection and Care for Children official)

In recent years there have been some efforts to strengthen the capacity of the commune child protection officers and the village collaborators to undertake case management on child protection. UNICEF has supported the development of “case management guidelines” developed by the University of Labour and Social Affairs and the Department of Protection and Care for Children. Plan and other NGOs have provided feedback on the guidelines which are designed for use by the local child protection officers and collaborators to understand and manage child protection cases in line with social work professional standards.

The commune child protection officer (government employee) has the primary responsibility for case management within the commune. They are supported by the village collaborators. The commune child protection officer responds to information from the collaborators, parents/ caregivers, children and other community members and Board members. They have the primary role to undertake the assessment, to prepare and implement the case plan, and also to make necessary referrals. For serious cases (for example on child sexual abuse, children in conflict with the law, serious abuse or exploitation) the DoLISA officer at district level will take over the responsibility for case management.

A locked cabinet has been provided to each commune to keep all child protection case documents confidentiality. However, case management documentation and reporting is still in its preliminary stages, and there is no easily available information on the number of cases being managed, referred or solved by the commune child protection officers. Furthermore, concerns remain regarding the confidentiality of child protection cases, especially when a number of child protection board members may be informed and involved in solving the case.

In addition to identifying child protection risks and concerns, the village collaborators also identify health and education concerns and promote birth registration, immunizations, health care and school enrolment. Furthermore, they support Plan’s work on positive parenting and the ‘learn without fear’ campaign.

## **IX. Children’s participation and involvement in CBCPS**

In all CBCPS project areas a children’s core group of 12 – 30 members has been established at the commune level. Thus, there are 27 commune children’s core groups (more than 50% of members are girls). In some project areas village level children’s core groups have also been formed with support from the Youth Unions or pioneer teachers. Children from the commune children’s core group are invited to be part of the monthly commune child protection board meetings. The children’s core groups (at commune and village level) work closely with the Village Collaborators to identify, prevent and respond to child protection concerns in their localities.

The children’s core group members are aged 10-16 year old girls and boys, those the majority are 13-16 year olds who are attending



secondary school. In most project areas the secondary school teachers have helped nominate children who have courage to speak up and play active roles in raising awareness on child protection in their communities. Children may then play a role in selecting their children's core group members among the nominated children. As a result of this selection process, children's core group members are unlikely to include the most marginalized children in their communities who may not be attending secondary school, or if they are, they may be less likely to be the most confident children in the class and are thus less likely to be nominated by the teachers. For example, children with disabilities are not included in any of the children's core groups.

Children's core group members are empowered as active agents in child protection. The main roles of the children's core groups are: to increase communication and awareness raising on child rights and child protection; to be actively involved in the identification and reporting of child abuse cases or children at risks; and to promote children's care, protection and participation in families and the community.

*We children are also collaborators. Our role is to identify children's problems and to report to the village collaborator, the villagers and the village head. We also join in communication sessions to share information on child rights and life skills with other friends. (girl age 15 years, Dakrong commune)*

Core group members are equipped with knowledge and skills to protect themselves and to help identify and respond to protection concerns that are raised by their peers. They receive training on child rights, child protection, life-skills, communication and conflict-resolution skills, and theatre for development. Plan's 'Bamboo Shoot/ children's participation training manual' has been used to increase children's skills and participation.

Children's core group members at the commune level usually organize monthly or bi-monthly meetings and they are supported to actively participate in social and advocacy activities to express their priorities, issues and proposed solutions on child protection. These children's representatives support the development and dissemination of child friendly communication materials (posters, pamphlets, guidelines) on child rights, child protection, children's participation, and gender equality among their peers in schools and in the villages / wards. Furthermore, life skills sessions are organized for additional children in the primary and secondary schools to increase their self protection and communication skills; and some commune based children's celebrations are organized with and for children on 'special days' (mid autumn lunar day, and international children's day) encompassing competitions, theatre and other games on child rights and child protection themes.

Government officials (provincial, district and commune level) and mass organisation leaders who have been actively engaged in the piloting of community based child protection mechanisms were vocal about the importance of children's participation in the community based child protection system and the benefits of children's involvement. They emphasised children's core group members' effectiveness in sharing information with their peers, and identifying and responding in a timely way to protection concerns facing children and young people in their communes.

*The children play a very important role in child protection work, so it is very important to education adults and children about their right to participate. When supported children are active in child protection work and they can communicate effectively with others. One of our priorities for the child protection system is how to strengthen children's participation and voice in the child protection work.*  
(Vice Director, Provincial DoLISA, Quang Tri)

Village elders, parents and other community members also highlighted benefits of children's participation in child protection:



*Child collaborators are in different classes so it is very easy for them to collect information from children. They support each other to share their views and concerns through drawing, talking or other creative communication methods (Male village head, Dakrong commune)*

*The child collaborator is a good role model for younger children. Children can identify concerns, analyse the situation, report and support a response to children's concerns, including the problem of children playing on-line games. Children find it easier to chat about their concerns with other children (mother)*

Children's core group members have also shared positive changes arising from their participation and from the community based child protection activities:

*Before we had no knowledge and lacked confidence. Now we have more knowledge on children's issues, more life skills and communication skills and more self confidence.... Now parents pay more attention to children and respect children more than before. We also listen to adults as we have better listening skills.*

*There is less beating of children by parents than before. Before more children dropped out of school, now children are encouraged not to drop out or to return to school. Children are doing less hard work than*



*before, and children have to travel less far for work.... These changes have happened to a lot of children in our village as the communication with parents is carried out at the village level and the commune level to raise awareness among parents. (Children's core group members, Dakrong Commune)*

*Children are happier, they are hearing friendly words and they have a positive feeling about life. Children have increased life skills and communication skills. Parents have better parenting skills and children are more respected by adults. Children are more confident and are able to speak in public; and children are doing more suitable work. (Children's representative, Vinh Long commune).*

However, key challenges faced while supporting children's participation in the community based child protection system include: socio-cultural traditions; limitations in reaching and empowering the most marginalised children; and time constraints for children's involvement. As a result of socio-cultural traditions towards children some parents still do not understand the importance of children's participation and many adults continue to underestimate girls and boys' capacities and thus they limit their roles in information sharing, identification, monitoring and response to child protection concerns. Furthermore, while some teachers, parents, village collaborators and commune officials are becoming increasingly aware of children's capacities and potential, there is still a desire to 'showcase' the communes 'best children' through the CBCPS, and thus the most confident children are usually nominated and selected as children's core group members who then have increased opportunities for life skills and other child protection trainings. As a result the current CBCPS work is limited in reaching and empowering the most marginalised children as active agents in child protection.

*Marginalised children may not be effectively reached and involved, especially in the core groups. In some areas the staff and commune officials want to select the 'best children' as they want to present their People's Committee in the best way, so they select 'the best of the best'. We are trying to solve this kind of challenge so that more marginalised children get opportunities to be core group members... Even for Plan staff they need to become more sensitive to support inclusive participation. We also need to increase adults capacity to be able to communicate in different ways with children with disabilities.*

*(Plan in Vietnam member)*



Girls and boys who are working as children's core group members face time constraints in undertaking their child protection activities, while also studying and fulfilling other household duties. Especially for children living in mountainous areas where the houses are scattered, separated by rivers or inaccessible pathways. In such areas it is especially difficult for the children's core group members to find sufficient time to work in close collaboration with the village collaborators and to attend each monthly commune Child Protection Board meeting – especially as such meetings are usually organised during school hours and thus disrupt their study. Advocacy with the local authorities is underway by Plan to organise meetings and trainings for children at times that suit them, and at times that do not clash with their studies.

*Children are effective in sharing timely updates in information concerning the situation of children in the community. However, one disadvantage is that involving children in Child Protection Board meetings can negatively affect children's study. One solution has been for the 1-2 Child Protection Board members and the Youth Union representative to organise separate meetings with children at times that suit them to listen to their information and suggestions, and share feedback with them about the meeting they missed (People's Committee and Child Protection Board chairman, Vinh Long).*

Children's representatives are keen to meet with children's core group members from other communes so that they can share their experiences, learn from one another and organise some collective child led advocacy initiatives on protection issues affecting them. In some districts and provinces children's core group members have had opportunities to meet and share experience in district level trainings.

Furthermore, Plan has supported three national children's forums where representatives of children from different parts of Vietnam were able to meet, discuss and present key messages to Government leaders. During the forums, children evaluated the previous Vietnam National Plan of Action for Children, current issues affecting their lives and proposed solutions. For example, in August 2011 a National children forum was held involving 180 children's representatives from 30 provinces. These children had been involved in provincial level forums prior to the national forum. Technical and financial support for the national forum has been provided by the Department of Protection and Care for Children, Youth Union, Women Union and international organizations including UNICEF, Plan, Save the Children, Child Fund, World Vision, CRS, and ILO, and local NGOs (VRPCR and CEFACOM). The topic of the Children's Forum was "children with safety, wholesome and friendly environment for children".

## **X. Capacity and support systems:**

Plan's approach to capacity building is informed by a child rights programming approach. Plan contributes to building capacity of children, parents/ caregivers, community members and government officials on child rights and child protection. Children and parents are empowered to assert their rights, and parents, teachers, community elders and government officials are supported to gain the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to fulfil their rights to better protect children. In the



child protection programme that preceded the piloting programme on CBCPS there was a strong focus on parenting education and capacity building of parents on positive discipline. This focus on parenting education and 'good parenting forums' continues as an integral part of the community based child protection systems work and is supported by the Women's Union members and Fatherland front organisation. A strong focus on good parenting and positive discipline contributes to the creation of child friendly communes where traditions of beating children are transformed with parents and caregivers listening to children's views, communicating with and guiding children to ensure appropriate behaviour and discipline.

*I have been part of awareness raising and discussions with other parents. We shared our experiences and responded to questions raised among us, so that each of us could help to find the solutions. Before the older people used to say 'spare the rod, spoil the child', but now 'we should respect the child as they know their rights and we should respect and guide them'. (Mother of two children, CBCPS commune)*

In strengthening the community based child protection system there is a key emphasis on building the capacity of village collaborators (1 – 2 from each village) to identify, prevent, early intervene and respond to child care and protection concerns. The capacity of village collaborators (mostly female) and children's core group members is strengthened on child rights, child protection and early intervention. The village collaborators work closely with the commune child protection officers.

*3 years ago we didn't know anything about child rights. Now we understand about child rights and the child protection laws and how to communicate with others. Some child rights have been fully implemented (village collaborator)*

Ownership of the community based child protection system and technical support for the CBCPS developments are embedded in the Department of Protection and Care for Children and Department of Labour Invalids and Social Affairs. Plan works collaboratively with DoLISA at Provincial and District levels to support child protection capacity building of the Commune Child Protection Board members, especially the commune child protection officers, the village collaborators and children's core group members on child rights, child protection, laws and policies on child protection and vulnerable children, child abuse prevention, case management and social work skills. In particular DoLiSAs own child protection specialists support capacity building on child abuse prevention and response<sup>23</sup>.

*As a child protection officer I see case management is particularly important and how to identify signals of child protection that enables early identification and prevention of child protection concerns. For the general population the training on positive discipline is most useful. (male child protection officer)*

*Most training has been useful. I highly appreciated the two trainings on social work skills and communication skills as they help us communicate with people, to identify issues and to work properly to support the children (female village collaborator)*

In the current phase of CBCPS work (late 2011 – 2012) there is increased investment by the Department of Protection and Care for Children and by Plan (and other partners) in developing a child protection data base and strengthening the capacity of CBCPS actors to systematically gather and document child protection related information. Plan is in the process of rolling out capacity building on data collection and M&E tools on child protection that have been developed with and by the Department of Protection and Care for Children. Plan has also advocated and worked closely with the Department of Protection and Care for Children in developing and editing the draft of a handbook for technical guideline for child protection officials and collaborators. However, one challenge has been developing a handbook that is accessible and practical for use by collaborators who have limited education. Plan will continue to work to develop a simpler version of the manual

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<sup>23</sup> See Annex 6 for an overview of training provided as part of CBCPM efforts

for collaborators that will be easier to use. Plans to strengthen community child protection officers and village collaborators capacity in child protection case management, social work skills, and support and referral for child protection services for children at high risk are underway.

## XI. Linkages with civil society and Government:

Focusing on a systems approach helps to establish and strengthen horizontal and vertical linkages among different actors and agencies that have responsibilities to prevent and respond to child protection issues. At the commune level the Child Protection Board brings together government officials from concerned agencies and mass organizations; and they work closely with the village collaborators and the children's core groups in each village. The Board has crucial management support from and therefore co-ordination with the People's Committee (at commune and district levels); and is able to mobilize support and engagement of the Women's Union and Youth Union members through their leaders involvement in the commune Child Protection Board.

*Since establishing the Child Protection Board there is more cooperation among agencies (Government departments and mass organisations) from the commune to the village level to address children's concerns.*

*Through the Child Protection board and the collaborators network we are clearer on our roles and responsibilities and have more cooperation to resolve cases. Before it was very hard as we did not have meetings together that allowed this kind of collaboration. (Commune child protection officer)*



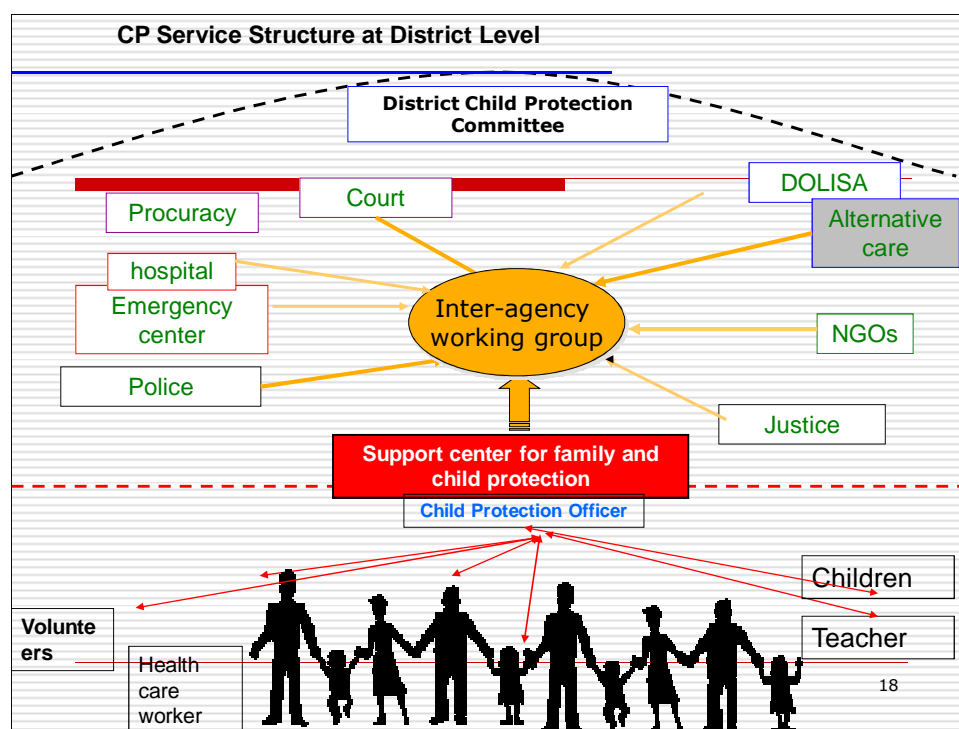
At the village and commune level the Commune Child Protection Board members work closely with the village collaborators and children's core group members to prevent and solve child protection concerns. Cases which cannot be solved at the commune level can be referred to the district level. At the district level referrals can be made to DoLISA, to the hospitals, court, police and to other NGOs to provide necessary services.

From the perspective of children's core group members (see photo), the people the children and young people work most closely with are their parents and family members who they live with. The boys and girls emphasised how their families take care of them, educate them and how families can provide the conditions to exercise all their rights. Children's group members also work closely with their friends; and with Plan staff. While a bit less influential they also have some partnership with the Youth Union.

As illustrated in the venn diagram developed by the boys who are members of the children's core groups, aside from parents, they also work quite closely with the Commune Child Protection Board, especially through the village collaborator. Furthermore, through the Child Protection Board the children have links to: health officials, the police, youth union, People's Committee, the Women's Union and the child protection officer. The children's core group members also work closely with Plan staff, and have links with their school, their head master and the school based youth union. However, both the girls and boys emphasised how they would like increased partnership and guidance from school teachers for their children's core group protection activities.

At the local level (commune, district and provincial) the DoLISA has a leading role on child protection issues. Thus the commune child protection officer and the DoLISA officials at district and provincial levels play an important co-ordination, capacity building and technical support role in the CBCPS. However, at the commune, district and provincial level the chairman or vice chair of the People's Committee is appointed as the head of Child Protection Board to ensure that they have the power and influence to bring on board other relevant government departments (e.g. education, justice, health etc) and other concerned agencies (such as the mass organizations). Furthermore, while recognizing that the heads of the People's Committee and concerned government departments need to be represented on the Child Protection Boards/ Committee at the district and provincial level, it is also appreciated that they have multiple responsibilities and limited time to focus on child protection related activities. Thus, the inter-agency working group has also been formed at the district and provincial level enabling DoLISAs child protection specialists to work collaboratively with the police and other technical officers from other concerned government departments (e.g. education, health, justice) to address child protection cases and concerns that have been brought to their attention (see diagram below). Partnerships with relevant civil society organizations (NGOs) that may provide child protection services (if they exist) are also established at the district, provincial, and national level. However, in many provinces and districts child focused NGOs are not yet present.

At the national level the Department of Protection and Care for Children under MoLISA is the main agency that is responsible to support and strengthen the national child protection system. At the national level links between the CBCPS and the Government run Child Helpline service and other NGO child protection services are also being strengthened.



Plan Vietnam has close collaboration with UNICEF, Save the Children, World Vision and Child Fund for advocacy and technical support to the government to implement the national programme on child protection in the period of 2011 – 2015 aiming at the approval of a national child protection strategy. Key strategy elements are: i) piloting of a community child protection system in 30 communes; ii) piloting a community based monitoring system and iii) using the evidence from the local level programme experience, the national level legislation analysis to advocate the Department of Protection and Care for Children for the development of a comprehensive national child protection framework and system.

While mass organisations are actively involved at the village level and in many ways reflect an active civil society, such mass organisations are closely aligned with the Government party and thus do not have independence that is characteristic of non government organisations. Increased efforts are thus needed to engage with civil society organisations, especially at the district and provincial levels to increase access to child friendly protection services. One advantage of piloting the CBCPS in urban settings is that there are more child protection services run by NGOs that referrals can be made to. Plan in Vietnam has started to map out and establish partnerships to support civil society organisations to develop child friendly protection services. For example some initial collaborative work has been initiated with CEFACOM and CSAGA. CEFACOM is working on child sexual abuse; and CSAGA is promoting positive discipline, and services to prevent and address child trafficking and HIV. Increased efforts are needed by Plan to strengthen civil society engagements, especially to scale up child protection service delivery in rural provinces are required.

Within Plan inter sector work in Vietnam on education and child protection is being supported to some extent. Child protection is identified as a cross-cutting theme for child protection, and efforts to integrate positive discipline training into parenting education as part of ECCD programmes and teacher training are underway. While the ECCD focuses more on parenting of children under 8 years, child protection focuses on parenting of children of all ages (including children 8-16 years). Plan's work on 'Because I am a girl' has contributed to increased efforts to get girls in school and to prevent early marriage. However, increased efforts to engage fathers in parenting work are needed to address gender discrimination and gender based violence. Furthermore, initial ideas to strengthen child protection in emergencies and to ensure collaborations between the child protection and disaster risk management teams need to be acted upon to more effectively identify and reduce vulnerabilities, to enhance children and communities' resilience to risks, and to support family and community based care and protection.

*Child protection is cross-cutting. It is reflected in our teacher training curricula, in activities with children, in parenting activities and in our work with parent teacher associations. If education and protection sectors work together more of children's rights will be fulfilled. If the CBCPS works well they can also help prevent and respond to school drop out to get children to stay in schools. (Plan in Vietnam, Education manager)*

Rather than current efforts which focus on different systems for education, health and child protection, the implications of developing a more integrated child rights system (encompassing prevention, monitoring, response and referrals) to children's rights to health, education, protection and participation at the commune, district and provincial level were also identified and discussed by some sector managers and by Government officials. Such discussions recognised that most sectors and government agencies are better at developing vertical systems, rather than horizontal inter-sector systems. Yet the rights and needs of children, families and communities can often be better fulfilled through more integrated, multi-sector efforts.

*For integration I think every village should have one consistent integrated system including protection, education and health. However, currently we have separate systems. Perhaps we can work together to develop one integrated child rights system? A referral system should be established which can make referrals for protection, education, health, family livelihood etc. to link children to further interventions that may be needed. One integrated system would mean that Plan needs to change the ways we develop programming and would require changes in the way we manage programmes. The Government is better at developing vertical systems rather than horizontal systems. Each agency and mass organisation has its own vertical system. However, in the community it is the same people. (Plan in Vietnam, Education Manager).*

*We see there is good cooperation between different agencies. However, we still have questions about what is the relationship between the child protection system, the health care system, the education system, and the justice system. We need better understanding about these different systems and their linkages. We need to focus on establishing effective referral systems. (Department of Protection and Care for Children official)*

## **XII. Monitoring and evaluation system and process:**

A monitoring and evaluation system and process for the community based child protection system in Vietnam is in its early stages of development. Systematic baseline information on child protection is lacking in communes where the community based child protection systems has been piloted; and a data base is not yet in place that easily collates information on child protection issues that are either prevented or responded to through the CBCPS. However, the village collaborators do collect basic information on all children in the commune and more specifically on children who are in need of special protection and/or children at risk. This information is collated manually by the commune child protection officer and shared with DoLISA staff at the district level. In addition, new data collection tools on child protection have been developed by the Department of Protection and Care for Children and are currently being piloted in programme areas supported by Plan.

Furthermore, Plan is in the process of supporting the Department of Protection and Care for Children to strengthen their 'Child Protection Monitoring and Evaluation System Development Process'. The purpose of this activity is to progressively establish a monitoring and evaluation system which allows the Government of Vietnam to collect, manage and analyse on boys and girls in need of special protection and assess the related governmental child protection in a systematic way, according to a set of specific, disaggregated and commonly agreed indicators. The initial phase of the project consists of a review of existing indicators (and other management information data) already available and the development of a framework for child protection monitoring and evaluation, as well as the development of a comprehensive list of potential indicators to be considered for adoption. There will be three types of indicators: a) indicators of the situation and trends; b) indicators of coverage and accessibility of services (output in terms of child protection interventions); c) and indicators of effectiveness (outcome/ impact of child protection interventions). The proposed indicators will cover three major of interventions: *primary child protection interventions*: which are often preventative in nature to prevent risks of abuse and harm; *secondary interventions*: activities directed at children and families who have been identified as vulnerable or at a higher risk of falling into special circumstances due to the presence of identified risk factors); and *tertiary interventions*: support and services provided to children who are experiencing maltreatment, exploitation, abandonment, drug use, criminal activity.

In Plan's programme units the availability of reliable data on programme progress, results and impact is supported through Plan's monitoring, evaluation and research (MER) framework. In line with this framework, data is primarily collected for measuring the *contribution* of the Country Programme to changes in behaviour among duty-bearers and rights-holders. Documentation of results, best practices and lessons learnt, along with more in-depth research is also promoted to build the evidence-base needed for successful advocacy and scaling-up of programme models. A range of different communication channels are used to ensure that the key messages identified through this process are effectively communicated to different target audiences. For example, after the Plan country office field trips, quick assessment and analysis with field-trip reports are written up and shared with partners and colleagues at PUs for further improvements. The Annual Participatory Program Review (APPR) process also provides an opportunity for local communities (women, men, girls and boys) to have an opportunity to feedback to Plan on its programs, approach and plans so that these are better understood by management. Lessons learned from the APPR process informed the next annual planning phase to improve the quality and relevance of programs for the communities that Plan works with.

Plan's most recent proposals for child protection encompassing CBCPS include outcome indicators, and use of KAP surveys to help establish baselines and improvements in child protection knowledge, attitudes and practices by parents/ caregivers, teachers, police etc. Key indicators of change used to measure Plan's success in establishing CBCPS in Vietnam include:



- ✓ Increased # of children who are better protected from abuse, exploitation and harmful practices thru effective Community Based Child Protection Systems in Plan areas
- ✓ Increased # of effective Community Based Child Protection Systems that are being scaled up by relevant duty bearers.
- ✓ Increased % of cases reported, referred and responded to through the community based child protection system.

It is also planned that a final evaluation of CBCPS projects will be undertaken by an external consultant focusing on 8 areas: relevance; equality & non-discrimination; participation; effectiveness; efficiency; sustainability & impact; scale-up & innovation, and; learning in 2014. Some key areas of research have also been identified including: research on the prevalence, incidence and key cause of child abuse in Vietnam; Research on socio-cultural norms and practices affecting children and their protection in ethnic minority communities; and research to explore the cost-effectiveness of the Community Based Child Protection System. It has also been acknowledged that increased efforts are needed to develop a gender sensitive CBCPS, including increased efforts to collect disaggregated data in research, monitoring and evaluation efforts.

*CBCPS is a bit gender blind; need increased gender focus and gender disaggregation. Also we have very little focus on children with disabilities. (Plan in Vietnam staff member)*

In late 2011 UNICEF commissioned an independent evaluation of the CBCPS work being supported by the Department of Protection and Care for Children and INGO partners in Vietnam to identify lessons learned to inform the scale up of CBCPS. A national consultant undertook the evaluation and the methodology primarily focused on interviews and focus group discussions with commune Child Protection Board members, village collaborators and district level officials in different project areas. The evaluation report (in Vietnamese language) had not been finalised at the time of the field study, however, tentative findings indicated that:

- The CBCPS is effective in establishing structures that enable the involvement of different stakeholders
- Increased capacity and skills in child rights, child protection and work with children
- Children are more respected and more child protection cases are being reported
- There is commitment from local communes to maintain and expand CBCPS.
- There is cooperation from the Department of Protection and Care for Children, UN and INGOs to improve capacity on child protection.
- Services on child protection are being developed

The evaluation also identified the need to improve: capacity on case management and support to disadvantaged children; the sustainability of the children's core groups; and to increase monitoring and technical support from the Department of Protection and Care for Children.

### **XIII. Sustainability and scale up:**

In Vietnam efforts to develop and strengthen community based child protection systems strengthen the accountability of government duty-bearers. The CBCPS model was initially developed by UNICEF, Save the Children and the Department of Protection and Care for Children in 2009. Plan in Vietnam and other agencies (Child Fund, World Vision) have supported the inter-agency collaborative efforts to pilot and scale up the model in different communes, while also supporting national level advocacy and planning to strengthen the national child protection system. An inter-agency approach to strengthening the Government to take primary responsibility for the establishment and strengthening of the community based child protection system has been particularly effective in Vietnam ensuring a coherent, coordinated approach which is led by the Government. There is a strong sense of ownership by the Department of Protection and Care for Children for national child protection system developments which include significant efforts to pilot

and scale up the community based child protection system; and there is ownership and commitment from Provincial level DoLISA officials where the CBCPS has already been piloted. DoLISA officials understand that child protection is part of their jobs, and that they must be active in strengthening the child protection system.

*We aim to scale up CBCPS to reach 50% of communes in the province. There are 132 communes in our province. With scaling up the CBCP system the main constraint is human and financial resources. It would be ideal for us to have a cadre at the commune level who is totally responsible for child protection. However, at this time we do not have a budget to pay for such a cadre. (Vice Director, Provincial DoLISA, Quang Tri)*

National level advocacy work undertaken in 2010 and 2011 primarily through the Department of Protection and Care for Children has been successful in developing and getting Prime Minister approval (in February 2011) for a National Programme on Child Protection (2011 – 2015) which encompasses support (plans and budgets<sup>24</sup>) for the scale up of the community based child protection system. Thus, while the CBCPS was initially piloted in 15 provinces across Vietnam, government plans and budgets are now in place to scale up the CBCPS to 30 provinces and cities reaching at least 50% of communes in each of these provinces. Furthermore, as part of the national programme at the provincial level the People's Committee are requested to develop a provincial program on child protection, with planned interventions and allocated budget. In Quang Tri province the People's Committee has successfully approved its provincial program on child protection, while in other provinces ongoing efforts are still needed.

*We want to promote child protection system in the whole country. We will not stop at the piloting phase. We have approval from the Prime Minister for the national child protection system and we also have a National Plan of Action for Children for 2020. In this we have more involvement of different ministries (education, health, justice, culture etc). Thus, we can confirm that Vietnam has a good commitment to implement the CRC and to promote the child protection system.*

*(Department of Protection and Care for Children, Director General, May 2012)*

One aspect of the national child protection system which is weaker is the role of civil society organization engagement, including the roles of child protection NGOs providing child protection services. Thus, in addition to working in close collaboration with the Department of Protection and Care for Children to establish and strengthen community based child protection systems Plan Vietnam will also continue to work closely with local civil society organisations involved in child protection. This will promote a long term and sustainable engagement between government and civil society that is not dependent on direct INGO engagement. Furthermore, it will enrich referral and child protection services for more sensitive and effective psychosocial, legal and other responses to child protection abuse and exploitation cases.

At the commune level the Child Protection Boards are encouraged to request budget allocations from the People's Committee who decide how to use incomes received from local tax revenues. In some communes where the CBCPS has been piloted there has been increased budget allocations and expenditure on child protection services. As part of the advocacy and budgeting process the People's Committee (at provincial, district and commune levels) has been encouraged to budget for stipends for the village collaborators who play a crucial role in monitoring, prevention and response to child protection concerns; as well as for wages of at least one commune child protection officer. Within Plan project areas the volunteer collaborators are supported with a monthly stipend of \$2.5. However, in UNICEF and Save the Children project areas the volunteer collaborators receive a higher amount. Thus, the various agencies are in discussion with the Department of Protection and Care for Children to identify an appropriate stipend that should be budgeted for village collaborators in each area.

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<sup>24</sup> \$84 million government budget has been approved by the Prime Minister to support the Child Protection Program in Vietnam in the next 4 years.

The active and increased capabilities of the village collaborators and the children, especially the core groups' members support longer term sustainable community based child protection developments. Other specific sustainability safeguards which are being integrated at the local level include: increased efforts to establish village level Child Protection Boards and village level children's groups which will be more accessible to children and parents; integrating discussions on child protection into other mass organisation meetings; a continued emphasis on working through and improving government systems with explicit requirements on local cost-sharing, as well as the development of clear exit strategies. As Plan moves further into rights-based programming, capacity building and behavioural change communication at the individual, organization and institutional levels are critical for ensuring that Plan contributes to a lasting change.

*Our advice to other villagers and communes is to form a village level Child Protection Board including the village head, village collaborators, the eldest man, child collaborators, and representatives from the Women's Union, Youth Union and the Party leader. Raise awareness and increase skills relating to child rights and child protection. (female child protection officer)*

*Integrate discussions on child protection into other regular meetings, including the monthly village meeting to communicate about child rights and government instructions. These monthly meetings can be used to increase awareness among local people on child protection. (Women's Union).*

As described earlier Plan has been piloting CBCPS in 3 provinces (Hanoi, Phu Tho, Quang Tri). From 2012 it will scale up to 7 (out of 9) provinces where Plan has PUs (and it will also expand the number of communes in provinces where it is currently working). This is part of the third phase of funding through Plan Finland. This CBCPS work targets behaviour change for girls, boys, parents, caregivers and local government service providers. During the implementation process, several communication campaigns are held to change practices that harm children (e.g. beating children) and to change social norms regarding children's participation. Increased efforts to identify and to build upon traditional beliefs and practices which enhance children's care and protection will also help attain local ownership and sustainability. CBCPS also promotes awareness and support from local authorities regarding appropriate development initiatives (such as village code on child protection) which sustain positive traditional practices and help create new social norms to protect children. Some villages have also raised their own Child Protection Funds with donations (each family gives 10,000 = \$0.5) which may be used to support the most vulnerable children and/or to support children's events/ festivals.

*We should include child protection in socio-economic development of the community for sustainable development. At the moment the communes depend too much on financial support from Plan. (Plan staff member)*

Plan is also encouraging close linkages with the PPDP (Pro-poor participatory development programme) to ensure the effective integration of child protection issues with the local planning process. Plan also seeks to capitalize on PPDP activities for community mobilisation and children's participation. Children will be engaged as active participants in the programme management cycle, both as an end in itself and as a way of ensuring that the best interest of the child is taken into account. In addition, Plan's child protection programme will work more closely with the ECCD Country Programme and the Disaster Risk Management – Climate Change Adaptation (DRM-CCA) Programme to ensure that those two programmes meet minimum standards on child protection and participation.

#### **XIV. Key achievements, challenges and lessons learned:**

Working in partnership with the government to establish CBCPSs is in line with a human rights based approach. In collaboration with other international organisations, Plan in Vietnam's work on community based child protection systems aims explicitly at strengthening the accountability of government duty-bearers in ensuring protection of children from violence through gradual development of a comprehensive legal framework and a national system for child protection and related services. Children's participation as right-holders is also emphasized. While the principles of equity and non-discrimination are reflected in terms of the most vulnerable children and families being identified and supported to access social protection and child protection services to reduce their vulnerability; the principle of inclusion and non-discrimination is not sufficiently applied when supporting children's participation and empowerment. Increased efforts are needed to reach and empower the most marginalised children (including out of school working children, children with disabilities, children living without parental care, children affected by HIV etc). Increased attention is also needed to apply gender analysis and gender sensitivity in all stages of the child protection system developments.

*I am in charge of child protection for the province. Quang Tri was among one of the first provinces to pilot CBCPS. We received direction from the Central Government (Degree 1408) and CBCPS is one of the action programmes for the National Programme of Child Protection (2011 – 2015). We base our work on this and we work in partnership with Plan to pilot and replicate the model. In the beginning we piloted the mode in 7 communes (5 in Vinh Linh and 2 in Dakrong districts). We are now working in 22 communes with the support of Plan and World Vision, and we have directly implemented in some communes<sup>25</sup>.... We talk about a community based child protection system as there are structures for child protection from the village to the provincial level (Vice Director, Provincial DoLISA).*

*Significant achievements of the CBCPS supported by Plan in different operational contexts in Vietnam include:*

- Government ownership of the community based child protection system – feeling of ownership among Commune Child Protection Board members who are local government officials, among DoLISA staff at district and provincial levels, and among Department of Protection and Care for Children staff at the national level.
- The CBCPS is formalized, structured and put into operation and led by the Government and local authorities.
- There is improved awareness on child rights, child protection, risks affecting children and positive discipline among family members, teachers and community members.
- There is less beating of children, more care and protection of children, increased birth registration, and increased response to address school drop outs.
- Children have a chance to raise their voice and there is increased value for listening to children's views and encouraging children's participation in commune decision making. Children's core group members have increased confidence and skills to protect themselves and are able to support other children, including vulnerable children.
- It is easier for people to report their child protection concerns. Due to the presence of village collaborators and children's core group members' child protection and vulnerability concerns are being identified and reported in a timely manner.
- Vulnerable children and their families are more able to access social protection schemes that they are entitled to; and there is improved information and understanding about issues affecting children in the commune.

*Within the community people are more open to report child protection concerns. In the past they may have known about issues, but they did not report them. Especially through some from the Children's core group we get regular updates on children's situation (commune child protection officer)*

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<sup>25</sup>CBCPS supported by Plan in 9 communes, by World Vision in 7 communes and directly implemented by DOLISA in 6 communes.

*In my village we have a collaborator and a Child Protection Board, if there is a concern about children we will report to these people... Before the Child Protection Board existed we used to share concerns with the teachers. However, it is useful to have the board as when children are in trouble they know who to report to and that there are people who will help them (mother)*

*The girls are expected to help their families in the field. However, since the Child Protection Board has formed and the Village Codes have been developed there is less discrimination and more girls are going to school (village head)*

- Child Protection Board members have clear roles and responsibilities relating to child protection according to their government position. There is good coordination and communication between different agencies to prevent and respond to child protection concerns in a good manner.
- Through the establishment of Village Codes new social norms on how parents should / should not behave with their children are being created and reinforced; traditional and new practices to enhance children's care and protection in communities are being promoted.

*Before the Child Protection Board a lot of children were beaten by their parents and there was emotional punishment, now this is reduced. Through the good parenting forum there is increased awareness among parents on child protection, and we have developed a Village Code through the cooperation of the local people. The Village Code clearly explains what parents can and cannot do, including that they cannot physically or emotionally punish their children. (village head)*

*Since establishing the Child Protection Board there is more cooperation among agencies (Government departments and mass organisations) from the commune to the village level to address children's concerns.*

*Through the Child Protection Board and the collaborators network we are clearer on our roles and responsibilities and have more cooperation to resolve cases. Before it was very hard as we did not have meetings together that allowed this kind of collaboration. (Commune child protection officer)*

*Significant challenges faced in establishing CBCPS in different operational contexts in Vietnam include:*

- Despite some improvements in child rights awareness, there is still limited knowledge on child rights and child protection thus contributing to child neglect and protection concerns.
- Due to traditional beliefs different forms of early marriage is not always identified or responded to as a protection issue; and some parents continue to believe that they have the right to discipline their children however they want.
- Commune child protection officers have other duties and responsibilities concerning other vulnerable groups (disabled, elderly, veterans) and thus find it difficult to find enough time for the child protection work.
- The village collaborators also have other responsibilities to gather information on population, health and other issues and thus also cannot always dedicate enough time to their child protection work. Such constraints are enhanced by their need to undertake their



own household and livelihood activities to support their own family incomes, as the monthly stipend for the village collaborator is very low (\$2.5/ month).

- In many project areas the number of children's core group members is limited in each village (just 1 or 2 per village). Children are busy with study, household chores and leisure activities, so it is difficult to find time for regular meeting between children's core group members and village collaborators; and for children's core group members to attend each monthly commune child protection board meeting. It would be more effective to have village level child groups so that more girls and boys, including the most marginalised can be actively involved in child group activities and training, and children may take it in turns to represent their peers in commune level child protection board meetings.
- In the mountainous areas it is difficult for village collaborators and children's core group members to travel due to geography – villages are far apart and mountainous and there are rivers to cross.
- The village collaborators have limited counselling and social work skills and would benefit from increased training.
- Although district/ provincial Child Protection Board and inter-agencies technical working groups exist which provide guidance and monitoring, there is still not a systematic approach to child protection case management, referral systems remain limited, and child protection services are lacking, especially in rural areas for tertiary level responses to children who are victims/ survivors of child abuse, violence or exploitation.
- There are few child focused Civil Society Organisations in rural and remote areas who can provide child protection services. (or even lack of) CSOs in rural and remote areas. CSOs are mainly based in big cities such as Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh city.
- Lack of suitable legislation for child protection, including weaknesses in the criminal law makes it difficult to persecute perpetrators of some forms of abuse towards children (e.g. emotional abuse). Also in some geographic areas there is a gap between traditional beliefs and practices (e.g. on child marriage) and implementation of the law.

*We face a lot of challenges in implementing our child protection work. As collaborators we are in charge of a lot of working areas (health, population as well as child protection), so we lack time that we can devote to child protection. Also the allowance for collaborators is very limited so we also need to do other work to earn a living. We have taken part in short trainings, but are not official social workers and have not received longer training. We need more regular training on social work skills and communication skills, and the collaborator allowance should be increased (village collaborator).*

*While the village collaborators have improved capacity, their skills are still limited. We also face challenges as the village houses are scattered which makes home visits more difficult, and awareness of child rights among the local people is limited. They do not want others to intervene they say 'they are our children we can do whatever we like with them'. So sometimes it can be hard for us to convince them to respect children's rights. (Female Child Protection board member, Dakrong Commune).*

#### *Key lessons learned:*

- Government ownership and leadership by the Department of Protection and Care for Children, MoLISA and DoLISA at different levels has been key to sustainability and scale up of CBCPS. Inter-agency advocacy, technical support and piloting have been effective.
- Involvement of the People's Committee has been crucial at commune, district and provincial levels as they have more power to engage other government agency leaders in the Child Protection Board to work collaboratively with DoLISA.
- Awareness raising on child rights and child protection is essential to prepare the ground for effective community based child protection systems. Good parenting forums and positive discipline training with mothers, fathers and caregivers has improved communication and understanding among children and their parents; and has helped create a more conducive environment for broader community based work on child protection.



- Encouraging villagers and members of mass organisations to develop Village Codes is effective in establishing good parenting and community practices which contribute to children's care and protection. Efforts to support villages in developing Village Codes should be scaled up; and increased efforts can be made to understand and build upon positive traditional practices that enhance children's care and protection especially in ethnic minority areas.

*Before we implement the system and build the structures we must invest a lot in awareness raising for the general public. Only when they understand the importance of child protection and the community based child protection system will it work. We may set up the structure through a top down approach, but it may not work. (female Child Protection Specialist, Vinh Linh district)*

*We must invest more to strengthen the skills of the village collaborators and the core children's group as it is these two groups who really do the work. (Vice Director, DoLISA, Dakrong district)*

*Social work and case management is very new. We need to look at how to better support case management in communes and village level. (Plan in Vietnam staff member)*



- Child protection case management is in its early stages of development. There still appears to be reluctance among children, parents and other community members to report cases of child sexual abuse, early marriage and harmful child work. Increased training of village collaborators and commune child protection officers is needed on social work skills, case management and referrals especially for sensitive cases such as child sexual abuse, and children in conflict with the law. Increased efforts are needed to support community based diversion of children in conflict with the law from formal justice systems.
- Need to advocate for sufficient government budget allocations to pay for a dedicated child protection officer at the commune level; and increased stipends to enable village collaborators to focus on child protection at the village level. The People's Committees at provincial and district level should also be encouraged to develop child protection plans and budget allocations.
- Formation of more inclusive village level Child Groups with increased efforts to reach and empower the most marginalised children is needed; and increased attention is needed to plan Child Protection Board meetings and trainings for children at times that do not clash with their studies. Village level Child Protection Boards can also be formed, especially in the mountainous working areas.
- Networking among children's groups can be supported at commune, district and provincial levels to enhance information and experience sharing, collective advocacy and children's involvement in policy and practice developments affecting them.
- Networking and exchange visits among village collaborators can also be supported to increase replication of good practices and joint problem solving.

*We need to have a data base system to gather information from the different communes. This is very important as the data base system will enable better management and prevention of children at risk as we will have a clearer understanding of the risks affecting children in different areas.... We also need to further strengthen the coordination and cooperation among inter-agencies. We have set up the Child Protection Board and the inter-agency working group, but in reality they take action when there is a big case, but they do not organise regular meetings. In most of the agencies mind they still consider child protection to be mainly DOLISA's role and they are not active in prevention efforts (Vice Director, DoLISA, Dakrong district).*

- The child protection data base and monitoring and evaluation system is in its early stages of development and needs to be strengthened, as child protection data collection (disaggregated by gender, ethnicity, age and other factors) can inform more effective child protection planning for appropriate child protection services, laws and policies.
- Greater efforts are need to engage civil society organisations in the child protection system in the Vietnamese context, and to strengthen and develop referral to child friendly child protection services that support children's recovery and reintegration if they have faced abuse, violence, neglect or exploitation.
- Increased inter-sector collaboration is needed within Plan to enhance the linkages between the parenting initiatives supported by the child protection and ECCD programme; and to ensure emergency preparedness and risk reduction that enhances child protection in emergencies.

**The development of Village Codes:** In Quang Tri Province, 21 Village Codes have been developed in 14 villages in Vinh Long commune (in Vinh Linh district) and in 7 villages in Darkrong Commune (in Darkrong district). 1,582 parent and local officials, and 240 children have been involved in village level meetings to develop these Village Codes. Furthermore, in Quang Tri province two workshops were held in two communes to develop a draft form of village code with guidelines from DOLISA. Child protection board members took a lead in this activity with the participation of local authorities and mass organizations. After the workshops were held in Dakrong and Vinh Long communes, DOLISA conducted two meetings at the district level to review and give feed back to the draft. The final drafts were then reviewed and approved by the District People Committee with recommendations from DOLISA and DOJ. A short version of the code was then printed out and public at the centre of village. The village codes emphasise the importance of parental care and support. They outline things parents should and should not do. For example, in village in Dakrong commune the code includes: no beating of children; allowing girls and boys to go to school; not forcing children to do hard work in the field, only allowing children to do work that is suitable to their age; ensuring that children wear raincoats to school in rainy season; adults to be with children when they are swimming in the river as it can be dangerous. If villagers violate the commitments shared in the Village Code the village chief and/or village collaborator will talk to them and try to get them to change their behaviour. Parents/ caregivers will be encouraged to share their commitment for changing their behaviour to protect children. If they do not change they are reported to the commune Child Protection Board. Members of the Board will visit and guide them. They will explain that the negative consequences of their behaviour on children, and they will also explain that the commune won't be able to support them if they do not follow the Village Code.

## **XV. Conclusion:**

The development of community based child protection systems has been strategically approached and established in the Vietnamese context through close collaboration with the Government, UNICEF and other international agencies. In 2011 inter-agency advocacy for the National Programme on Child Protection was approved by the Prime Minister with a budget of \$84 million for the next 5 years. The national programme includes scale up of CBCPS in 30 (out of the 62) Provinces in the next 5 years (reaching 50% of communes). Key elements of a national child protection system including a strong focus on community based child protection mechanisms have been planned for including:

- Advocacy on laws, policies and plans on child protection, including the National Programme on Child Protection (2011 – 2015) which includes support for community based child protection system strengthening;
- The Department of Protection and Care for Children (central government) ownership of the child protection system developments and the establishment of government

coordination and referral mechanisms (Child Protection Boards at the Provincial, District and Commune levels) with a clear mandate on child protection.

- Current plans by the Government to establish and build the capacity of a committed, competent social work workforce by scaling up training to have 50,000 qualified social workers by 2020. If such plans are realised the commune child protection officers may also be qualified social workers, while village level collaborators skills as para social workers can also be enhanced.
- Mechanisms that support inter-agency collaboration and referrals to address child protection cases at provincial, district and commune levels.
- Children's participation in child protection prevention, monitoring, reporting and response; including support for child led action and advocacy initiatives at the community level and opportunities to support children's participation in policy and practice developments.
- Engagement of mass organisations (Women's Union, Youth Union) to raise awareness, prevention and response to child care, protection and parenting education.
- A strong focus on prevention and early interventions, including referrals to government social protection schemes, identification of risks and home visits to reduce risks, and the development of Village Codes.

Thus, there is a lot to learn from good practice on child protection system developments in Vietnam; and as in all contexts there are components of community based child protection systems that need strengthening to increase realisation of children's protection rights. These include:

- Increased efforts to empower the most marginalised children and to support inclusive child managed groups to enhance their self protection.
- Increased understanding of traditional child protection practices among different ethnic minority groups to build upon traditional social norms which protect children, and to transform social norms which are not in the best interests of the child.
- Improved systems for child protection case management and social work skills among child protection officers and village collaborators to ensure increased reporting and sensitive response to serious cases including child sexual abuse, early marriage, exploitative child labour, children without appropriate care, and children in conflict with the law.
- Improved child protection data base and monitoring and evaluation systems.
- Increased engagement of civil society organisations and strengthening child friendly non discriminatory child protection services.
- Increased inter-sector collaborations to strengthen community based child protection work in emergency preparedness and response through Disaster Risk Management programmes; and to ensure further linkages between education and protection work, including more integrated parenting education initiatives.

## See Annexes

<b>Annex</b>	<b>Content:</b>	<b>Page numbers:</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Schedule for Field Visit in Vietnam for the Regional Study on CBCPSs</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Stakeholders involved in CBCPS study in Vietnam, May 2012</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Methodology used during field visits with CBCPS members, children, parents/ caregivers, government officials and other stakeholders</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Ethical guidelines</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Child/ user friendly information</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Overview of training provided as part of CBCPS efforts, Plan in Vietnam</b>	<b>68</b>



## ICPREC

### Annex I: Schedule for Field Visit in Vietnam for the Regional Study on CBCPSs

#### Introduction:

For each of the country field studies 8 days have been allocated for field work. Thus, we need to carefully plan for and make most efficient and effective use of the 8 days to learn as much as we can from Plan staff, partners, CBCPS members and from children and young people themselves about their Community Based Child Protection Mechanisms. Where-ever possible we are also keen to listen to the views of district and/or national level officials, and other agencies who collaborate with Plan to support and scale up CBCPSs and their linkages with national child protection systems.

The schedule for Vietnam has been adapted to the context, taking into consideration local travel that is needed to reach target communities, as well as the time availability for consultations with children (on non-school days). We also need to factor in time for preparations with local staff or partners to build their capacity to assist in co-facilitation and/or translation for use of the participatory tools and interviews with children, community members and other key stakeholders (who do not speak English).

*Core research tools to be used during each field study visit include:*

- Interviews and FGDs with Plan staff and partners who are actively engaged in CBCPS work
- FGDs and use of participatory tools with members of CBCP committees/ groups
- Participatory tools with children and young people's representatives (especially with those who are actively engaged in community based child protection activities either through their child groups/ councils and/or through children's representation in the CBCPSs).
- Observation in the community.
- Interviews with local officials, and if possible with district and/or national officials.
- If possible interviews with other agencies supporting child protection system strengthening

Further to Plan Vietnam's Child Protection focal point interest in Option A within the 8 day field visit a 1 day workshop was planned to bring together representatives from CBCPSs – women, men, girls and boys and Child Groups from 3 CBCPS communities. In addition outreach visits, FGDs and participatory tools were used with adults and children in 2 other communes. Plus interviews / FGDs were undertaken with Plan staff, partners, officials and other agencies.

### Proposed schedule for the 8 day field visit schedule:

Days:	<b>OPTION A</b> <b>(workshop with CBCPS representatives from 3 communities; 2 CBCPS outreach visits; and interviews with key stakeholders)</b>	Comments
	<i>The consultant will arrive in Hanoi early morning on May 19<sup>th</sup></i>	
Day ONE: Saturday May 19 <sup>th</sup>	Consultant arrives in Hanoi early morning. Onward travel to Quang Tri province. ¾ day orientation and preparatory workshop with Plan child protection staff (and key partner staff) to prepare for facilitation of the one day workshop with CBCPS representatives (women, men, girls and boys) on Sunday May 20 <sup>th</sup> (as it is the only non-school day).	Through emails (and if needed skype calls) Claire and An/ Hung/ Hien were in regular communication prior to the field work to support timely planning and preparations for the field visits to gain necessary permission and informed consent from adults and children who will be involved in outreach and/ or workshop consultations. A draft child/ parent information sheet has already been shared (for translation and use in local languages).  Where-ever possible the workshop was organized on a non-school day (a Sunday).  Additionally, the outreach community visit discussions with children can be adjusted to school shifts to meet with children after school has finished.
Day TWO: Sunday May 20 <sup>th</sup>	1 day workshop bringing together representatives of CBCPSs and Child Groups from 3 <u>Communities 1-3</u> – women, men, girls and boys.	
Day THREE Monday May 21 <sup>st</sup>	Early morning travel to <u>Community 4</u> (Vin Long) – undertake FGD and participatory tools with: i) CBCPS members, ii) children.	
Day FOUR Tuesday May 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Early morning travel to <u>Community 5</u> (Dakrong) – undertake FGD and participatory tools with: i) CBCPS members, ii) children.	
Day FIVE Wednesday May 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Interviews with district and/or provincial officials; FGD with Plan field staff. Evening return to Ha Noi.	
Day SIX Thursday May 24 <sup>th</sup> .	Interviews with national officials; and (if time) interviews with other Plan staff (e.g. working on DRR, education and CP to explore the links with CBCPS)	
Day SEVEN Friday May 25 <sup>th</sup>	Half day morning consultation with Plan, Save the Children, UNICEF, Child Fund, World Vision and Department of Protection and Care for Children (government agency) on lessons learned from piloting CBCPS since 2009 (if possible); Afternoon to include an interview and debriefing with country representative / managers (if possible)	
Day EIGHT Saturday May 26 <sup>th</sup>	Final meetings with CP focal point and CP staff from Plan International.  Night flight home	

### Field research:

Participatory research processes and tools with children and adults including:

- visual mapping and drama of protection issues affecting them;
- time line to identify key achievements and challenges faced over time in community based child protection
- venn mapping of community based child protection mechanisms and their links to other structures enabling referral and support
- response pathway exploring how CP risks/ concerns are identified through CBCPSs and what happens next
- body mapping (before and after) to explore the outcomes of community based child protection on girls and boys lives, and/or on parents, caregivers or community members etc



**Schedule for one day workshop with CBCPS representatives (women, men, girls and boys):**

<b>Time:</b>	<b>Topic:</b>	<b>Method/ tool:</b>	<b>Comments:</b>
06:00	Consultant and plan	team travel to commune	
08:00 – 08:45	<b>Introductions</b>	<b>Name introductions</b> <b>Purpose - objectives and positive ground rules for the learning exercise</b>	<p>From 3 communities where there are CBCPSs encourage them to identify, s/elect and send their 8 representatives (4 adults, 4 children):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2 women</li> <li>- 2 men</li> <li>- 1 girl aged 8-12 years</li> <li>- 1 boy aged 8-12 years</li> <li>- 1 girl aged 13-17 years</li> <li>- 1 boy aged 13-18 years</li> </ul> <p>The workshop would then involve 6 women, 6 men, 6 girls and 6 boys = 24 participants.</p>
08:45 – 09:30	<b>What do children need protecting from?</b>	Form five separate circles of: Men; women; children 12 years and under; girls aged 13-17 years; boys aged 13-17 years. In each circle play the <b>‘finger catch’ game</b> which can be used to introduce and explore the theme of <b>‘what do girls and boys need protection from?’</b> <b>Brainstorm and post-it exercise</b> in each of these groups Cluster post-its.	
09:30 – 09:50	Refreshments		
09:50 – 11:15	<b>Timeline of CBCPSs and Child Group – history, key achievements and key challenges</b>	Introduction of <b>time line activity (5 mins)</b> Members of each of the 4 communities work together in their own community groups ( <i>for 35 minutes</i> ) to prepare a Time-line that illustrates the history about when the CBCPM started, when the Child Group was formed. Key changes in how children have been involved in the CBCPM over time. Key achievements of the CBCPM and/or Child Groups over time and key challenges faced by the CBCPM and/or Child Groups over time. Each briefly present their time lines (5 mins to present & 5 min Q&A) = <i>30 mins</i> Plenary discussion on most interesting findings (5 mins)	
11:15 – 14:00	Lunch	<i>Space for creative drawing, poetry, dramas (optional) after lunch</i>	
14:00 – 15:10	<b>CBCPSs and their links to other structures</b>	Introduction of <b>venn mapping (5 mins)</b> Women and men work together in one group ( <i>for 35 mins</i> ) to prepare a venn map that illustrates how their community based child protection mechanisms link to other structures (within their community, in the district and/or nation). Identifying who the CBCPS work in collaboration with, who they get support from and who they send referrals to. The children and young people work together in one group ( <i>for 35 mins</i> ) to prepare a venn map that illustrates how	

		<p>their Children's Groups link to the CBCPS and other structures (within their community, in the district and/or nation). Identifying who the Child Groups work in collaboration with, who they get support from and who they seek support from.</p> <p>Each group briefly present their venn maps (5 mins to present &amp; 5 min Q&amp;A) = 20 mins. Followed by plenary (10 mins)</p>	
15:10 – 15:25	Refreshment	& Energizer games	
15:25 – 16:25	<b>Identify key strengths, weaknesses and suggestions to improve CBCPSs</b>	<p>Introduce the <b>'H' Assessment</b> (5 mins)</p> <p>Women and men work together in one group and the children and young people work in a separate group (for 35 mins) to each prepare a 'H' Assessment of the strengths, weaknesses and suggestion to improve community based child protection systems.</p> <p>Each group briefly present (5 mins to present) ~ 15 mins. Followed by plenary (5 mins) – if time encouraging them to share stories of most significant change and challenge.</p>	
16:25 – 16:30	<b>Workshop closure</b>	<p>Share information about how the findings will be used.</p> <p>Ending game.</p>	

**Schedule for one day community visits** (updated with advice from Plan Vietnam CP focal point):

<b>Time:</b>	<b>Who meet with:</b>	<b>Proposed tool/ methods:</b>	<b>Comments:</b>
<i>6:30 am Travel from the province to the commune</i>			
08:00 – 10:20	<b>CBCPS members</b> (e.g. members of CPC committee, surveillance committee)	Introductions (15 mins) <b>Time Line</b> encompassing the <b>Response pathway</b> (considering before and after CBCPS) and key strengths and challenges (120 mins)	<p>- Introductions will always be ensured. However, the tools in bold are the ones we will prioritise if time is short ☺</p> <p>- We appreciate that CBCPS members will be busy with their ongoing work etc. However, if as many members can stay for the initial 90 minutes to be part of the Time Line discussion it will be most appreciated. The other activities can be continued with less members.</p> <p>See if Plan can help provide refreshments to adults and children's participants involved in the consultations.</p>
10:30 – 11:15	<b>Community members</b> – parents, caregiver, religious elders etc	Introductions <b>Interview or FGD</b> (encompassing the response pathway (45 minutes)	
11:15 – 14:00	Lunch Break	<i>With opportunities for children to draw, and for adults to record 'stories of Most Significant Change'</i>	
14:00 – 16:10	<b>Children's representatives</b> (6 – 20 girls and boys aged 8 - 18 years (with a special focus on involving children from marginalised backgrounds) especially those who are members of Child Groups/ councils and/or CPCs.	Icebreaker introductions (15 mins) & finger catch game <b>Body Mapping</b> (90 mins) - exploring what children need protecting from - existence of CBCPSs and Child Groups - pathway response before and after - changes in children before and after 'H' Assessment of CBCPS and Child Groups (20 mins)	
16:15 – 17:00	<b>Local official(s)</b>	(if time and possible) Interview (45 minutes)	
17:15	Travel back to province		

## Annex 2: Stakeholders involved in CBCPS study in Vietnam, May 2012

Who?	Role and location:	Gender:		Age range (if child)	Total number:
		Male	Female		
One day workshop on CBCPS using participatory tools, Quang Tri with representatives from 3 communes (Vinh Son, Vinh Tu and Vinh Chap) on May 20 <sup>th</sup>	7 Commune CP Board members (including 3 child protection officers, representatives from People's Committee, and Youth Union)	6	1		7
	Village collaborators	0	5		5
	Children's representatives – members of child core groups	6	9	10 – 15 years	15
	Plan staff (2 PU, 2 country office)	3	1		4
Outreach visit to commune to Ving Long on May 21 <sup>st</sup> with FGDs and participatory activities.	Commune Child Protection Board members including: 1 male people committee chairperson, 1 female health officer, 1 male child protection officer, 1 female Women's Union leader, 1 female Youth Union secretary, 1 male judicial officer, 1 male police officer, 1 male head teacher from lower secondary school, 1 male rep from fatherfront federation, and 1 male war veterans union leader.	7	3		10
	Village collaborators		9		9
	Children's representatives – members of child core groups	3	3	13-14 years	6
	Village elders	2			2
	Parents		2		2
Outreach visit to commune Dakrong on May 22 <sup>nd</sup> with FGDs and participatory activities	Commune Child Protection Board members (including Head of People's Committee and Commune CP Board, 1 male head of Primary school, female child protection officer, and head of Women's Union) and 2 village heads	4	2		6
	Village collaborators		9		9
	Children's representatives – members of child core groups	4	5	14-15 years	9
FGDs with provincial and district level DoLISA officials, Quang Tri, May 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Vice Director, Provincial DoLISA; DoLISA Child Protection Specialist, Vinh Linh district; Vice Director, DoLISA, Dakrong district	2	1		3
Interviews with Plan staff, Ha NOI May 24 <sup>th</sup>	Child Protection Manager, Education Manager, DRR Manager, Director of Programmes.	2	2		4
FGD with Department of Protection and Care for Children and World Vision, May 25 <sup>th</sup>	Department of Protection and Care for Children staff (including Director, Vice Director, Head and Vice Head of Child Protection Department, Head of Planning Department, CP officer) and Child Fund CP coordinator.	4	4		8
<b>Total</b>	<b>30 men, 39 women, 13 boys and 17 girls</b>				<b>99</b>



### Annex 3: Methodology used during field visits with CBCPS members, children, parents/ caregivers, government officials and other stakeholders

#### Community consultation with CBCPM members FGDs with CBCPMS using a) Time Line incorporating Response Pathway Analysis and (if time) b) 'H' Assessment

**Note:** It is hoped that at least 6 – 15 members of CBCPM (ideally equal numbers of women and men) will have interest and time to be part of the consultation about their community based child protection work. Where-ever possible it will be appreciated if diverse members can be involved – women, men, local officials, teachers, religious leaders, community leaders / elders, marginalized people, children's representatives etc. The consultation will take just over two hours (or up to 3 hours if they have time). It is crucial that their participation is informed and voluntary, that they have a choice to participate. Arrangements should be made for the discussions to take place in a quiet place with minimum disturbance. Their views will remain confidential and anonymous<sup>26</sup>.

#### Draft Schedule (2 1/4 – 3 hours)

15 mins	<b>Introductions</b>
100 – 120 mins	<b>Time Line</b> incorporating <b>Response pathway</b> questions considering responses before and after CBCPMs
30 - 45 mins	If time 'H' assessment of CBCPMs and/or Stories of Most Significant Change and Challenge

**Materials needed:** Flipchart paper, tape, non permanent markers, post it notes (two colours), 3 colour stickers.

**Introduction:** We appreciate the time given by your Community Based Child Protection group members today. Plan Asia is conducting a comparative analysis of the community based child protection mechanisms that their offices support across the Asia region. We are here to learn more about your CBCPGs (adapt name according to context) and any links that you have with other groups or committees, authorities, CBOs, local leadership). In today's discussion we will use a timeline activity and group discussions to explore the history of your Child Protection Group, its purpose, the kinds of activities you are doing, the training you have had, how protection concerns

<sup>26</sup> Unless any significant child protection concerns are raised that require follow up by Plan's Country Office to ensure action in their best interests.

are responded to in your community, key successes in protecting children and key constraints faced over time. If we have time, we also have an 'H' assessment for you to explore the overall strengths, weaknesses and suggestions to improve CBCPMs.

In addition we plan to facilitate discussions and activities with representatives of children and young people to better understand what changes the CBCPM is making to the lives of children in your community.

The findings of the learning in different countries will be used by Plan to improve efforts to strengthen communities' efforts to protect children.

*All views will be respected during these discussions and will remain anonymous. We encourage each of you to be open and honest so that we may collectively identify the strengths of your Child Protection Group, as well as the weaknesses and challenges, in order to identify lessons learned for effective scale up in the future.*

*We would also like to ask permission to take photos. We will only use positive image photos in the report. Do you agree to photos being taken?*

**Introductions of people in the group discussion – name, role.**

## **PART A) Time line Activity and Focus Group Discussion incorporating pathway analysis discussion (90 – 120 minutes)**

Time line of the CBCPM is a useful tool to gain an overview of the community based child protection project. It can provide a simple illustration of the history of the work, capturing key training, different phases of work, how protection concerns are responded to in your community, successes and challenges over time

### **Identifying the history and main activities of CBCPMs:**

- Draw a horizontal line along the length of flipcharts (2-3 stuck together).
- Using time as a reference point enables the CBCPM members to identify when their CBCPM was formed and to mark this on the time line.
- How and when was your child protection committee/ group established? Please describe if and how it built upon on any existing committee or structure, or if it was newly established?
- On the time line, record key activities undertaken by the CBCPM

### **Purpose, Roles and Responsibilities:**

- What is the purpose of the CBCPM? Has the purpose been clear from the beginning or has it changed over time?
- What are the main roles and responsibilities of your group members?
- How have you informed other community members – women, men, girls and boys; and/or other groups or committees in the village about the roles and responsibilities of your CBCPM?

### **Membership:**

- How many members are there in your CBCPM? How were they selected?
- Have there been any changes in membership over time?
- Are women and men from some of the poorest households members of the CBCPMs? Why?
- Are children or young people involved as members in the CBCPM? Please describe why? (or as invitees and/or observer)



- What value do the local officials and/or local religious elders have for the CBCPM? How do they collaborate and/or support the CBCPM?

#### **Meetings:**

- How often do you meet? And where?
- What proportion of members usually join the meetings?
- What are the main agenda issues discussed in these meetings? How is the agenda of the meeting decided?
- What are follow up mechanisms for decisions made?

#### **Capacity building and support:**

- *On the time line, please identify any training and/or other key support that you have received on child rights or child protection from Plan and its partners since your CBCPM was established.*
- How relevant, timely and effective was the training/ support?
- To what extent do you feel you have been able to put the training into practice? Please give some examples.
- What kind of support/supervision and monitoring has taken place since the training to guide realisation of training's goals and subjects?
- What kind of supervision and monitoring do you think would help ensure effective implementation of trainings?

#### **Local beliefs and traditions:**

- Can you share some examples of local beliefs, customs and traditional practices that are positive for the protection of children? To what extent is your CBCPM supporting these types of positive traditional practices?
- What are traditional ways of supporting vulnerable children in your community? Does CBCPM support these traditions? If so how?
- Can you share some examples of local customs and practices that are harmful to the welfare of children? To what extent is the CBCPM helping to change these practices? Please describe how?
- What are your views about disciplining children? How prevalent is beating of children in the community? Have there been any changes in behaviour or attitudes since forming the CBCPMs?

#### **CBCPMs and awareness raising on child protection:**

- Can you describe what kind of awareness-raising on child rights and/or child protection (including existing national laws) your CBCPM or your NGO partner has undertaken?
- What proportion of the community has been reached through awareness-raising?
- How effective/ ineffective do you feel the awareness-raising has been? Why?
- Which villagers (women, men, girls, boys, older or younger generation) have been most/ least influenced by the awareness-raising? Why?

#### **CBCPMs and Children's participation:**

- Can you describe any ways that girls and boys are actively involved in the CBCPM or in efforts to prevent or respond to child protection concerns in your village? *Record significant developments in children's participation on the time line.*
- What are the main benefits and/or challenges of involving children?

#### **Protection issues, response pathway, and the difference CBCPMs make:**

- What are the main protection concerns facing girls and boys of different ages and backgrounds in your community? *(place on post-its across the top of the timeline flipchart)*
- We would like you to identify 3 of these protection issues that we can use to explore the 'response pathway' – who do children/ adults tell and what happens next? This will help us

better understand how your community identifies and responds to children's protection needs, with or without the CBCPM.

- Which are the 3 common child protection issues faced by girls and boys of different ages in your community? Lets explore each one – one at a time on post-its on a separate flipchart
- A. For each of these issues lets use post its to explore what would happen step by step:
- CP ISSUE 1, then same questions for CP Issue 2 (and if time also explore CP Issue 3):
  - Who could the child go to for help?
  - What would the family do?
  - What would the community do? Who would be involved? What supports would actually be provided for the child and family?
  - Who would be the key decision makers about what would happen?
    - What role would be played by people/services outside the community?
- B. What would be the likely outcome of the responses to the problem?
  - What would likely happen to the child/perpetrator/family?
  - How satisfied with this outcome would various stakeholders (child, family, community, people outside the community) be with this outcome? Why?
- C. What difference does CBCPM make? What other option did the child/family have?
  - What difference does the CBCPM make?
  - What would have happened to a similar case like this before the CBCPM (or in a neighbouring community where there is no CBCPM)?
  - What other options would they have for responding to their concerns? Which would they use/ not use? And why? (e.g. if not already mentioned, would they report to local authorities, to police, to a social worker)

#### **CBCPM and case management:**

- Which child protection issues does your CBCPM feel most confident responding to?
- Are there any protection issues that you feel less confident or effective in dealing with? If so, which? Please describe.
- How many child protection cases has your CBCPM been working on in the last 3 months?
- Can you describe processes or steps that you follow in case management?
- Can you describe the different roles and responsibilities of CBCPM members and/or NGO staff in terms of case management? Who takes what responsibility?
- How do you maintain confidentiality when dealing with child protection cases in your community?
- How do you take into consideration a child's own views, their gender, age, religious, ethnic, cultural or other factors to ensure a non-discriminatory approach?
- How do you ensure that decisions are made in the best interests of the child?
- What are your key achievements / successes in case management?
- What are your key challenges or constraints in case management?

#### **CBCPM and Referrals:**

- What kinds of referrals have you made in your case work?
- Which referrals have been most/ least effective and why?
- Have you mapped the processes of referrals and/or made an overview for a standardized response?

#### **Outcomes on children:**

- Which children have most benefitted from CBCPM activities? What is your estimate about how many girls and boys have benefitted from CBCPM interventions? How?

- What changes are there in girls and boys lives as a result of the CBCPM? Please describe some of the most significant changes resulting from CBCPM interventions.
- Please can you describe any ways that your CBCPM has been effective in preventing or responding to children in contact with law, orphans, children affected by child trafficking, or child soldiers?
- Have there been any negative impacts on children or families as a result of CBCPM interventions? Please describe.

***CBCPMs and Networking:***

- How does your CBCPM network with other committees or groups within your village/district?
- How do your CBCPM work/collaborate with Govt agencies at community and district level?
- What are the benefits or challenges of networking?
- How do you think networks could be strengthened?

***Sustainability and Replicability:***




- How do you see your CBCPM developing or evolving in the future?
- As and when Plan and its Partners would phase out support to your CBCPM, what are your plans for the future? Is your CBCPM prepared to be sustainable beyond Plan's support?
- What, if any, support does your CBCPM need to better protect girls and boys (especially the most marginalized) in your community and to be more effective?
- What have been your main lessons learned on how to protect girls and boys in the community?
- What are your views and suggestions about replicating and scaling up CBCPMs in different parts of the country?
- What practical advice would you give to other communities who want to establish a CBCPM?

***Recommendations: (if 'H' is not being used)***

- *What recommendations do you have for strengthening the CBCPM?*
- *What can be done to make it easier for children to seek or access help?*
- *How could the help/services that children receive be improved?*

## PART B: 'H' Assessment (30 minutes)

- In this part of the evaluation, a 'H' assessment on flipchart paper will be used to explore the overall strengths and successes of the CBCPM; the challenges and constraints faced by the CBCPM; and suggestions to improve the Child Protection Group and efforts to protect children from all forms of abuse, neglect, violence and exploitation.
- *Children and young people's representatives, as well as other community representatives (parents/ caregivers, religious elders) may be involved in this part of the assessment to gain wider perspectives. It is possible that the 'H' Assessments can be undertaken simultaneously in different stakeholder groups within one community to see similarities, as well as differences in perspectives. Also to draw upon a wide range of stakeholders to give suggestions on how to strengthen and improve the community based child protection work.*
- *Like in the diagram a 'H' shape on large flipchart paper. At the top of the left hand column draw a happy face. At the top of the right hand column a sad face. Below the middle "H" bar draw a light-bulb to represent 'bright ideas'.*

	<b>CBCP Group/ committee</b> (village name, district, province) <i>Add Date of assessment &amp; the number of people involved in this H assessment</i>	
		

- *The 'H' assessment will be used by the CBCPM to explore and for them to record:*
  - In the top middle part of the 'H' record: 1) the location of your CBCP group/ committee (village, district, province; 2) the date you completed the 'H' Assessment; and 3) the number of people, *gender and background of people involved in this 'H' assessment* (e.g. 3 women, 3 men, 2 girls and 2 boys).
  - In the left hand column (*happy face*) discuss and record the strengths and successes of your Child Protection Group
  - In the right hand column (*sad face*) discuss and record the weaknesses, challenges or constraints faced by the Child Protection Group. *Remember to be open and honest in sharing weaknesses or challenges faced as it will help to inform program improvements.*
  - Under the light-bulb (*middle lower part*) Please discuss and record your suggestions to improve or strengthen work by the Child Protection Group to increase child protection from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation. *Think about and include what training or support is most needed to increase the confidence and skills of CBCPMs.*

THANK ALL PARTICIPANTS and INFORM THEM ABOUT NEXT STAGES OF THE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS PROCESS.

**Observation:** Good observation skills are crucial throughout field work and the evaluation process. Through observation we can notice:

- Which members of CBCPMs are most/ least vocal; whether women and men are both vocal and active? To which extent?
- Body language and readiness to discuss and address child protection concerns;
- Whether children are actively involved in CBCPM discussions and/or in their own children group activities;
- Whether boys and girls have confidence to speak up during field visits;
- Which children speak more or less, for example whether proportionately more boys or girls, older or younger children are active? Whether children with disabilities are involved? Which children have most confidence?
- The degree to which parents or community members listen to children's views;
- Any protection concerns during our field visits – e.g. children involved in harmful work, children being beaten etc.

All these observation are crucial and can be triangulated with other data collected to inform the evaluation findings. The main evaluator will also keep a *diary* to record observations, ideas, thoughts and feelings. This diary will help identify and cross-check findings, and to record on gaps in information, or ideas for new areas to explore.

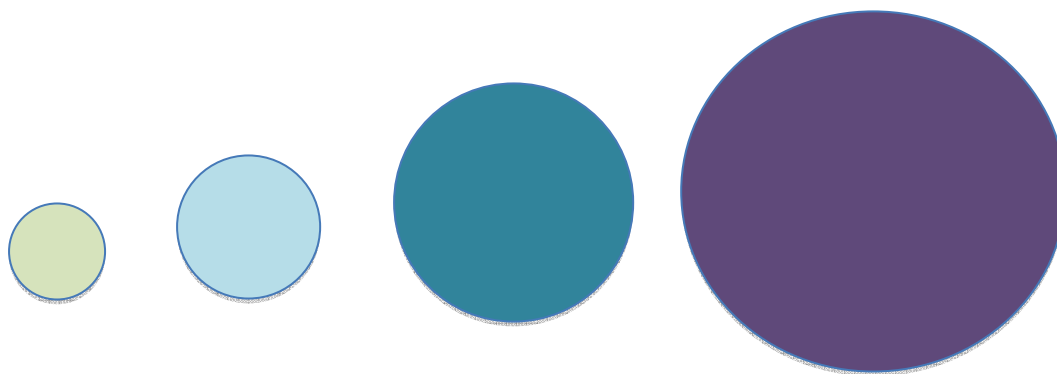
## Venn diagram

The Venn diagram can be used to show a social map of how the CBCPM links with other groups and institutions within and outside of the community. It can be used to show which individuals and groups have influence on CBCPM decision making, as well as the relations between village institutions and outside forces, such as government services or development agencies.

*Materials needed:* if available, large flipchart paper, coloured paper to cut circle shapes in different sizes (at least four sizes), glue, scissors, tape, pens.

*Key steps:*

- Explain that this tool will enable the participants to identify and explore important partners/institutions (and individuals) who influence their CBCPM, and to explore social and power relations.
- Take 5- 10 minutes to discuss, identify and list stakeholders who have a positive or negative influence on the CBCPM.
- Come back in a large group and let the participants share their findings to create a list of all relevant partners/institutions or individuals(e.g. local NGO, teacher, religious leader, Women's Group, Youth Group, Local Government Official, police, local military commander, national government etc.)
- Identify the importance of each partner to the CBCPM: For each partner/institutions or individual, decide how important their influence / support is to CBCPM processes. Their current influence may be positive or negative. Place the partner's name on a large, medium, small or very small circle depending on their importance. The most important partners are each written on their own circle.



- Start building the Venn (Circle) Diagram: Write the CBCPM name (or whatever their group/ committee is called) on one of the large circles and place it in the middle of a large flipchart paper.
- Arrange partners/institutions near or far away from the CBCPM to indicate the degree of partnership between them: Discuss and place each of the circles near or far away from the CBCPM to illustrate the degree of partnership. For example if there is a lot of collaboration between the CBCPM and the Village Development Committee then place the circle with the Village Development Committee close to the CBCPM circle. If the Child Group, Youth Group and Women's Group work collaboratively on CBCPM on child protection then place all three circles close to one another. Or for example if there is no partnership between



the CBCPM and the local Government official in supporting protection then place the circle with the local Government official far away from the CBCPM.

- Discuss the Venn diagram findings: what are your main findings? Who are good allies and partners of the CBCPM for child protection initiatives?
- Discuss and record on post-its the types of support you get from each of these stakeholders and if there are any ways to strengthen such support.
- Which people or groups have power to make decisions concerning resources that may be used to support the child protection response?
- Are there any important influential partners/institutions in terms of child protection who the CBCPM has not formed a positive partnership with? If so, why? How can partnerships be built with such stakeholders to ensure effective and sustainable child protection response?

## Girls and Boys: Community Based Consultations

**Note:** It is hoped that at least 6 – 20 girls and boys aged 8 -18 years (with a special focus on involving children from marginalised backgrounds) will have interest and time to be part of the consultation, and that especially children who are involved in CBCPMs and/or Child Clubs/Groups in their community will be involved. The consultation will take approximately two hours (or ideally 2 and a half hours if they have time). Children will be asked to participate in activities and discussions about child protection and the role of the Community Based Child Protection Group and Child Groups in their community (village/urban area). It is crucial that their participation is informed and voluntary, that they have a choice to participate, and that their parent or caregiver has agreed to their participation in this activity. Arrangements should be made for girls and boys to discuss in a quiet place with minimum presence of other adults so that they have freedom to express their views and experiences. Furthermore, their views will remain confidential and anonymous<sup>27</sup>. If in local culture, girls and boys can't participate in consultations together, please arrange for separate girls and boys consultations.

### Draft Schedule (2 - 2.5 hours)

20 mins	<b>Icebreaker introductions</b> and Finger Catch Game
90 mins	<b>Body Mapping</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- exploring what children need protecting from</li> <li>- existence and activities of CBCPMs and Child Groups</li> <li>- pathway response before and after</li> <li>- changes in children before and after</li> </ul>
15 mins	Refreshment and energizer
30 mins	If time 'H' assessment of CBCPMs and Child Groups
	If time drawing or drama

**Materials needed:** Flipchart paper, tape, non permanent markers, coloured crayons, post it notes (two colours), 3 colour stickers.

**Introduction:** We appreciate the time given by you today. Plan Asia is supporting us to visit different communities and different countries in Asia to learn more from children and adults about how children can be better protected. Plan wants to learn more about how communities can protect children from different forms of abuse, violence and exploitation. We are here to learn more about how child protection concerns are identified and responded to in your community. We will use a 'body mapping exercise' to better understand your views about the things you need protecting from, and to better understand what changes the Child Protection Committee/ group (adapt word **CBCPM** to context) is making to the lives of children in your community. The findings of the learning in different countries will be used to improve efforts to strengthen communities' efforts to protect children.

*It is your choice to participate. You are encouraged to participate IF you are interested in the discussions. All views will be respected during these discussions and will remain anonymous. Only in cases where a child may be at risk, we will inform others to ensure a sensitive response in the child's best interests. We encourage each of you to be open and honest so that we may collectively identify the protection issues most affecting girls and boys in your communities, the ways in which the Community Based Child Protection Mechanism is*

<sup>27</sup> Unless any significant child protection concerns are raised that require follow up by Plan's Country Office to ensure action in their best interests.

*helping to protect children, as well as any suggestions to improve the activities. All your suggestions will help us to identify ways to improve this programme in the future.*

*We would also like to ask permission to take photos. We will only use positive image photos in the report. Do you agree to photos being taken?*

**Circle icebreaker introductions** of girls and boys in the group: name, age and an action of your favourite hobby.

**Finger catch game:** In the circle place your right hand flat towards the person on your right. Place your left index finger on the hand of the person on your left. The caller counts to 3, on 3 you have to try to save your left finger, while also trying to catch the finger of the person on your right.

### **Body Mapping** (90minutes)

#### **Introductions and identifying protection issues affecting girls or boys:**




- Stick 3 large flipcharts together and ask for a volunteer to lie on the charts to have their body shape drawn around.
- Explain that this 'body' represents all girls and boys in their village/ ward.
- First of all we want to consider all the things that girls and boys need protecting from in their communities, homes, schools, workplace or in wider society. Think about the finger catch game we just played to think about 'what do children need protecting from?' In small gender groups discuss with your friends what girls and boys of different ages and backgrounds need protecting from. Place each of these protection concerns on a post it.
- Ask the girls and boys groups to present their post its and to place them inside the body.
- Discuss whether each of these protection risks affect all children in the community and/or whether some children are more vulnerable or at risk to certain protection issues. *Make a note which children (girls/ boys, ages, background factors) are more vulnerable to certain protection concerns and why.*

#### **Exploring the existence of CBCPMs in addressing children's protection concerns and pathway responses:**

- If children face any of these protection concerns what do they do? Who do they tell? What happens next?
  - Is it easy or difficult to share your concerns? What happens if girls or boys do share their concerns? What happens next?
  - Let's identify 3 common child protection issues faced by girls and boys of different ages and backgrounds in your community to explore the '**response pathway**'? Let's explore each one – one at a time on post-its on a separate flipchart to show who children tell, what happens next, and what is the likely outcome?
  - Are these protection issues different for boys and girls? And do the responses differ for boys and girls?
  - Can you tell us more about the **CBCPM** in your community? When did it start? Who is in it? What do they do?
  - Do children also have their own Child Clubs/Group? If so, when did it start? Who is in it? What do they do? Are out of school children, children from different caste/ethnic groups, economic backgrounds also included? Are children with disabilities also included?
  - Are children able to participate in community based child protection activities? If so, who? And how?
  - Are children included in any community meetings or training on child rights or child protection? If so, what?

- What happened before the **CBCPM** was here? Who did children tell when they faced a protection issue? Was the response (solution offered, if any) different to the response following the establishment of the CBCPM?

*Exploring which protection issues are addressed by **CBCPMs**:*

- If we look at the different post-its you made about the different protection concerns faced by girls and boys which protection issues do they think **CBCPMs** address most/ least?
  - Place a 'green'  sticker by protection issues that **CBCPMs** often address
  - Place a 'yellow'  sticker by protection issues that **CBCPMs** sometimes address
  - Place a 'red'  sticker by protection issues that **CBCPMs** rarely address
- Which protection issues would they most like **CBCPMs** to give more attention to? Why?

*OUTCOMES: Now let us use the body shape to explore the outcomes on children of the **CBCPMs**. We will draw a line down the middle of the body. The left hand side is children in their community BEFORE the formation of the **CBCPM**, and the right hand side represents children AFTER the formation of the **CBCPM**. Where-ever relevant children may also want to comment on before and after changes from their own participation in community based child protection initiatives.*

- Encourage the children to think about any changes in girls and boys in their community as a result of **CBCPM** activities. We can use the body parts to facilitate discussion and to record different changes BEFORE /AFTER in relation to:
  - the head: any changes in what girls and boys think about/ worry about/ feel happy about? Any changes in children's knowledge? Any changes in the way adults think about girls and boys?
  - the eyes: any changes in the way children see themselves/ their families/ their communities? Any changes in the way adults see girls and boys? Any changes in the way vulnerable children are seen by their peers, their families/ their communities?
  - the ears: any changes in what children hear? Any changes in how adults listen to girls and boys? Any changes in the way children listen to adults?
  - The mouth: any changes in the way children communicate or speak? Any changes in the way adults communicate or speak to children? Any changes in opportunities for children to express their views or concerns? Any changes in opportunities for children to participate in issues affecting them in their homes, schools, community or work place?
  - The heart: any changes in the way girls and boys feel? Any changes in the way adults feel about or care for girls and boys? Any changes in the way girls or boys from different backgrounds experience discrimination in the community?
  - The stomach: any changes in what children eat? Or families eat?
  - the hands and arms: any changes in what activities girls and boys do? What kinds of work they do? Any changes in the way adults treat them? Any changes in the way children are beaten by adults?
  - the feet and legs where do they go: Any changes in where children go? In what they do? In where they feel safe?
  - The clothes: Any changes in what children wear?
- Discuss the changes achieved, and give examples. Identify whether this is a change for a only a few children (\*), some children (\*\*), or a lot of children (\*\*\*). Can they share concrete examples.
- Discuss which girls and boys have most benefitted from **CBCPM** activities? Which children have least benefitted? Why?
- Have there been any negative outcomes on children or their families from **CBCPM** activities? Please describe:
- Can they describe any local beliefs, customs and traditional practices that help protect children (especially the most vulnerable)? Is the **CBCPM** supporting these practices?
- Can they describe any local customs and practices that are harmful to children? Is the **CBCPM** helping to change these practices?

- What are children's suggestions/ recommendations to improve **CBCPMs** so that they are more effective in preventing and responding to abuse, violence and exploitation. *Can divide back into the girls and boys groups and give them post-its to record their recommendations.*
- What practical tips would they give children in other villages about what they can do to increase prevention and protection of girls and boys from all forms of abuse, neglect, violence and exploitation?

*Note: IF TIME and INTEREST CAN ALSO DO:*

- a '**H**' **Assessment** with Children about the **CBCPM** and/or about their Child/ Youth Club/Group; and/or
- **Drawings by children** to show changes in girls/ boys lives in their community since the formation of the **CBCPMs**. Alternatively children may prefer to develop **poems, songs or dramas** about the impact of **CBCPMs** or recommendations to strengthen them. They will be encouraged to participate in the medium of their choice.

**Observation:** Good observation skills are crucial throughout field work. Through observation we can notice:

- Whether children are included in **CBCPM or Child Club/Group** discussions?
- Whether girls and boys have confidence to speak up during field visits;
- Which children speak more or less, for example whether proportionately more boys or girls, older or younger children are active? Whether children with disabilities are involved? Which children have most confidence?
- The degree to which parents or community members listen to children's views;
- any protection concerns during our field visits – e.g. children involved in harmful work, children being beaten etc.

## **Informal interviews with parents, caregivers or other community stakeholders on CBCPMs**

*Approximate time: 45 minutes*

**Introduction:** We appreciate the time given by you today. We are here to learn more about how children are protected in your community. Findings from these discussions will be used by Plan International and their partner organizations to inform and strengthen improvements in child protection work. We encourage you to share your views freely, they will remain anonymous and will help us improve our efforts to care for and protect children.

*Key questions:*

### ***Child protection concerns and pathway response:***

- What do you feel children need to thrive and develop?
- What are the main protection concerns facing girls and boys of different ages and backgrounds in your community?
- Which group of children face most protection concerns and why?
- If a child faces such a concern (*taking an example raised by the interviewee*) – what does the child or family do? Who do they tell? What happens next? What is the usual outcome?
- *Are these protection issues different for boys and girls? And do the responses differ for boys and girls?*
- Are there any other options about who a child or family member should tell? Why are these options not usually taken?
- Who do you approach if you have a concern about your own child's or another child's protection in the community?

### ***Community perception of CBCPM:***

- Can you tell us about the CBCPM in your community.
- When did it start? Who is in it? What do they do?
- What is the CBCPM doing to prevent or protect children from the protection concerns you raised? Please describe.
- What proportion of the community members do you think are aware of the CBCPM and what they do?
- How does the CBCPM inform and involve other community members in their activities?
- How easy or difficult is it to approach the CBCPM if you have a concern about a child in your community? Please describe.
- Can you describe any experiences that you or your neighbours have of interacting with the members of the CBCP group/ committee?
- In your view what are the most significant/useful activities undertaken by the CBCP group/ committee? Why?
- What are main strengths and weaknesses of the CBCPM?

### ***Addressing child protection concerns before and after CBCPMs:***

- Before the CBCPM existed, how were child protection concerns addressed in your community? Were there any formal and/or informal organizations/agencies?
- What difference does it make to have a CBCPM in your community? Please describe
- How do people in neighbouring communities without a CBCPM prevent or respond to child protection concerns?

### ***Awareness-raising by CBCPM:***



- Have you been part of any awareness raising (activities) organised by the CBCPM or partner organization? Please describe.
- How appropriate was the awareness-raising to your local context?
- How effective/ ineffective was the awareness raising? Can you describe any personal changes in practices or attitudes or any changes among community members as a result of the awareness raising?
- What proportion of the community do you feel have changed practices or attitudes as a result of the awareness raising? Please share examples.
- Which people haven't been reached or changed through the awareness raising? Why?

***Disciplining children:***

- How are children disciplined in your community?
- How prevalent is beating (or any other type of physical punishment) of children in the community? And in school?
- Have there been any changes in behaviour or attitudes to beating children since the CBCPM was formed? Please describe.
- Has any training on positive disciplining been provided at home and in school?

***Local practices:***

- Can you share any examples of local beliefs, customs and traditional practices that are positive for the protection of children?
- Is the CBCPM supporting these types of positive traditional practices?
- What are traditional ways of supporting vulnerable children in your community?
- Does CBCPM support these traditions?
- Can you share any examples of local customs and practices that are harmful to children?
- Is the CBCPM helping to change these practices?

***Listening to children:***

- What are your views about listening to children and encouraging their expression and participation (particularly in relation to protect them from any sorts of harms)?
- Are children able to participate in CBCPMs or any other community based child protection activities? If so, who? And how?
- Is there any example of representatives of children participating in CBCPMs as members/invitees/ observers? What is the value addition of children's participation in such structures (CBCPMs)?
- What are your views about the benefits or challenges of encouraging children's expression and participation?

***Increasing child protection:***

- Do you have any suggestions about what can be done to better protect girls and boys in your community?
- Do you have any suggestions to strengthen the role and effectiveness of the CBCPM?
- What are your views about the value of CBCPMs and whether they should be formed in other villages?

## **SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS and/or FGDs**

### **With Government officials or social workers involved in CBCPMs at national and/or local (district and community) level**

**Introduction:** We appreciate the time given to meet with us today to share your views about the CBCPMs that Plan supports. We are here to learn more about your views about how Community Based Child Protection Mechanisms are protecting girls and boys, and how they can be strengthened, made more sustainable and scaled up. Findings from these discussions will be used by Plan International and their partner organizations to inform and strengthen improvements in child protection work. We encourage you to share your views freely, they will remain anonymous and will help us improve our efforts to care for and protect children.

*All views will be respected and will remain anonymous. We encourage you to be open and honest so that we may identify lessons learned and strategic approaches for effective scale up in the future.*

#### **Key Informant interview and/or FGD (60 – 90 mins)**

*All views will be respected and will remain anonymous. We encourage each of you to be open and honest so that we may collectively identify the strengths of the CBCPMs, well as the weaknesses and challenges, in order to effectively identify lessons learned for future developments.*

*Introduction – name and role of each discussion partner*

#### **Contextual background:**

- What do you see as the main protection concerns facing girls and boys of different ages and backgrounds?
- What – in your view – are positive steps being taken by the Government, INGOs, national NGOs, CBOs or communities to address these and what are the major issues that are insufficiently dealt with on national and local levels?

#### **Legal and policy framework:**

- Can you describe legal and policy developments which support Community Based Child Protection Mechanisms and/or their linkages with more formal child protection systems at higher levels?
- Is there a process to improve legislation and policy for child protection?

#### **Co-ordination and Planning:**

- To what extent do you think agencies involved in child protection (government, INGOs including Plan, NGOs and CBOs) are well-linked and coordinated at different levels?
- To what extent do the formal coordination mechanisms link to community based mechanisms?
- Are there any groups or key individuals within communities who could be better linked/integrated into service delivery to promote child protection?
- What makes the existing national coordination mechanisms for child protection effective/ineffective?
- How effective is inter-ministerial coordination with other sectors (health, education, justice, social protection etc) to better support child protection? How can it be improved? Do you see a role for Plan International or other NGOs in this process?
- How is child protection planning processes linked to other national processes, such as poverty reduction strategy planning or decentralization processes?

#### **Capacity Building:**

- What training have Government officials and/or social workers received on child protection and in specific, CBCPMs? From whom?
- How effective has it been? How has the training been applied in practice?

***CBCPMs and their protection response:***

- What is your understanding of Community based Child Protection Mechanisms?
- Which protection issues do you think CBCPMs can confidently and effectively respond to?
- Are there any protection issues which you think CBCPMs are less confident or effective in responding to? If so why?
- What factors do you feel influence whether CBCPMs are working well/ less well?
- What are the most significant successes of CBCPMs? Please share some examples.
- Can you describe the different roles and responsibilities of local government officials and/or governments social workers/case workers/child rights officers in helping to resolve child protection cases that are identified in communities?
- Is there a referral system to follow up on protection issues in the district you work in? And if so, how effective is it?
- Are the CBCPMs linked to this referral system? And if so, does this referral system work well? What are the challenges?

***Children's participation:***

- What are your views concerning children's participation and the role of children in community based child protection mechanisms?
- What do you see as the main benefits or challenges of children's participation?
- What opportunities may there be for children to influence policy or practice developments in the future?

***Human and financial resources:***

- Do you think that your office/department has appropriate staff (number and qualifications) to carry out your Department's *(or organization in the case of UNICEF/NGO etc)* mandate on child protection at a State/ Divisional, district and community level? What are the main constraints regarding human resources in the child protection sector?
- Do you think the currently available Government budget and resources for child protection services are adequate to carry out your mandate? Please explain and provide examples.

***Sustainability, scale up and replicability?***

- What factors influence the sustainability of CBCPMs?
- To what extent do you feel that the CBCPMs can be replicated and scaled up across the country?
- What recommendations do you have to strengthen child protection mechanisms and systems at community, provincial/ State or national level?
- Do you have any specific recommendations in terms of: laws and policies; planning; co-ordination; services; or resources?
- Do you have any other recommendations for Plan to consider with regards to effective use of resources and strengthening of CBCPMs?

## **Key Informant Interviews and/or FGDs with other agencies regarding their perspectives of Plan's strategic and practical work on CBCPMs and broader strategy and plans to strengthen child protection systems.**

**Introduction:** We appreciate the time given to meet with us today to share your views about the CBCPMs that Plan supports. We are here to learn more about your views about how Community Based Child Protection Mechanisms are protecting girls and boys, and how they can be strengthened, made more sustainable and scaled up. Findings from these discussions will be used by Plan International and their partner organizations to inform and strengthen improvements in child protection work. We encourage you to share your views freely, they will remain anonymous and will help us improve our efforts to care for and protect children.

Recognising your organization as a key child protection agency working in (insert country), this interview seeks to learn more about (insert country).

*All views will be respected and will remain anonymous. We encourage you to be open and honest so that we may identify lessons learned and strategic approaches for effective scale up in the future.*

**Key Informant interview and/or FGD (60 – 90 mins)**

### **Relative strengths and weaknesses of Plan's strategy on CBCPM and CP system strengthening**

- What are your views on the relative strengths and weaknesses of Plan's strategy and practical work on strengthening CBCPMs and strengthening child protection systems at different levels?
- What type of collaboration do your agencies have on child protection system building and strengthening? Does your agency interact directly with the CBCPM's supported by Plan?
- Which protection concerns do you feel are currently being effectively addressed through the CBCPMs?
- Are there any protection concerns affecting girls or boys that are being less well addressed through the CBCPMs? Why?
- What do you feel is needed to strengthen the links between CBCPMs and higher level formal CP mechanisms and systems at sub-national and national levels?

### **Contextual background:**

- What do you see as the main protection concerns facing girls and boys of different ages and backgrounds? Which groups are most at risk?
- What – in your view – are positive steps being taken to address these by the Government, by Plan, your agency or other agencies, and what are the major issues that are insufficiently dealt with on national and local levels? Why?

### **Legal and policy framework:**

- Can you describe the (if any) legal and policy developments which support Community Based Child Protection Mechanisms and/or their linkages with more formal child protection systems at higher levels?

### **Co-ordination and Planning:**

- To what extent do you think the agencies involved in child protection (government, UN, NGO and CBO) are well-linked and coordinated at different levels?
- To what extent does Plan pro-actively coordinate with other agencies working on child protection system strengthening? How?
- To what extent do the formal coordination mechanisms on child protection link to community based mechanisms?
- Are there any groups or key individuals within communities who could be better linked/integrated into service delivery to promote child protection?

- What makes the existing national coordination mechanisms for child protection effective/ ineffective?
- How effective is inter-ministerial coordination with other sectors (health, education, justice, social protection etc) to better support child protection? How can it be improved? Do you see any role for NGOs in improving this coordination?
- How is child protection planning processes linked to other national processes, such as poverty reduction strategy planning or decentralization processes?

### **Capacity Building:**

- What training have Government officials and/or social workers received on child protection and in specific, CBCPMs? From whom?
- How effective has it been? How has the training been applied in practice?
- What in your view are the capacity training needs for Government staff collaborating with CBCPMs?

### **CBCPMs and their protection response:**

- What is your understanding of Community based Child Protection Mechanisms?
- Which protection issues do you think CBCPMs can confidently and effectively respond to?
- Are there any protection issues which you think CBCPMs are less confident or effective in responding to? If so why?
- What factors do you think need to be taken into consideration by NGOs when forming effective and inclusive CBCPMs that can respond sensitively to child protection concerns in their villages?
- What are the most significant successes of CBCPMs? Please share some examples.
- What is the minimum level of awareness raising or training that needs to be provided to CBCPMs to enable them to understand their roles and responsibilities and to start to function?
- Can you describe the different roles and responsibilities of local government officials and/or governments social workers in helping to resolve child protection cases that are identified in communities?
- Is there a referral system to follow up on protection issues in the district you work in? And if so, how effective is it in terms of assistance to victim and retribution for perpetrator?
- Are the CBCPMs linked to this referral system? And if so, how effective/ ineffective are CBCPMs in making and following up on relevant referrals? What are the challenges?
- What are the main constraints faced by CBCPMs in case management?

### **Children's participation:**

- What are your views concerning children's participation and the role of children in community based child protection mechanisms in (insert country)? What are constraints that hamper children's participation?
- What opportunities may there be for children to influence policy or practice developments in the future?
- How can quality Child Groups and partnerships between children and adults be strengthened and scaled up by Plan and other agencies?

### **Human and financial resources:**

- Do you think that the relevant government departments have appropriate staff (number and qualifications) to carry out their mandate on child protection at a State/ sub state level? What are the main constraints regarding human resources in the child protection sector?
- Do you think the currently available Government budget and resources for child protection services are adequate to carry out their mandate? Please explain and provide examples.

### **Sustainability, scale up and replicability?**

- What factors influence the sustainability of CBCPMs?
- How sustainable are CBCPMs supported by Plan and/or your agency? What factors influence their sustainability?
- To what extent do you feel that the CBCPMs can be replicated and scaled up across the country? What strategies could be used?
- What recommendations do you have to strengthen child protection mechanisms and systems at community, district, provincial or national level?
- Do you have any specific recommendations in terms of: laws and policies; planning; co-ordination; services; or resources?
- Do you have any other recommendations for Plan to consider with regards to effective use of resources and strengthening of CBCPMs?

***Monitoring and evaluation:***

- How effective is Plan International in monitoring and evaluating child protection outcomes?
- How can Plan International and other child protection agencies improve their M&E systems to demonstrate positive impact in terms of child protection as well as challenges?
- What role can Plan play in catalysing and supporting the Government and NGOs to develop and implement effective data collection, monitoring and evaluation systems on child protection issues affecting girls and boys of different ages?

***Recommendations:***

- Do you have any other recommendations for Plan International to increase the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact or sustainability of its efforts to strengthen community based child protection mechanisms?



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## Annex 4: ETHICAL GUIDELINES

### Ethical Guidelines

*Ethical issues which will be considered and applied<sup>28</sup> during the Plan study and field work on community based child protection include:*

- ✓ **Principles of child rights:** The evaluation will be conducted in a manner which ensures respect for children's rights to participation, non-discrimination and action in their best interests.
- ✓ **Ensure effective communication and co-ordination** systems are in place between Plan, their partners and communities to ensure timely sharing of information about planned field visits to enable informed voluntary participation of key stakeholders (grass-root CBOs, children and young people, parents/ caregivers, community members, NGO staff, government officials etc).
- ✓ **Timing of the evaluation** – Field visit planning is needed that responds to both the constraints and the opportunities in the time available by different stakeholders (girls, boys, women and men in communities; officials etc) to meet during these field visits. Appropriate methods and efficient use of time are needed to make effective use of the field visit time slots with different stakeholders. Where-ever possible meetings with children and young people should be arranged at times that do not interfere with children's school work, especially exam periods; or with other work responsibilities. Extra efforts should be made to find time to meet with children's representatives from marginalised groups (e.g. working children, children from vulnerable households).
- ✓ **Informed consent** - participation by different stakeholders, including children must be both relevant and voluntary. All stakeholders must be given clear information about the purpose of the field visits. Participants must be aware of their rights – for example, to withdraw from the study activities at any time. It is also important to gain consent, understanding and acceptance from parents/ caregivers and the wider community. Where-ever necessary permission from children's teachers or employers may also be needed. However, it is better to avoid situations where children either miss school or lose earnings due to their participation.
- ✓ **Avoiding harm to participants** – the consultants are responsible for making sure that the study is conducted in a manner that will do no harm to children or adults. Consultants are responsible for protecting all participants from any potential emotional or physical harm that might occur as a result of their involvement in the study and to protect their rights and

<sup>28</sup> Adapted from Save the Children Norway (2008) Ethical Guidelines for ethical, meaningful and inclusive children's participation in participation practice. Feinstein, C. and O'Kane, C.; and from Child Frontiers Ethical Considerations section in 'Research Manual: Child Protection Systems: Mapping and Analysis in West and Central Africa, August 2010'.



interests. Traditionally in many parts of Asia girls and boys are not expected to speak up or express their views in front of adults. Thus, to support children's informed, safe and meaningful participation in the study it will be important that information is shared in advance with NGOs and Community Groups to encourage space for girls and boys to meet with the consultant to share their views (with minimum other adults present). Information about the field visits should be shared with children and their parents/ caregivers to gain their informed consent.

Harm can arise from methods that cause participants to recall distressing experiences or feelings. Participants will not be asked to talk about personal experiences of violence or abuse, but rather about general protection issues affecting girls and boys in their community. The consultants will avoid asking insensitive questions or probing for information when it is clear that participants would prefer not to answer. Discussions may be stopped if they become distressing or upsetting to participants. Before the field visits begin, the consultants in consultation with Plan Asia Regional Office and/or country teams child protection personnel will agree what actions will be taken, in accordance with agency child protection procedures, should a child disclose abuse (actual or potential). Similarly, the team will agree upon a procedure to ensure that distress is immediately recognised and mitigated, and that appropriate support is found for ensuring the comfort and wellbeing of the child.

- ✓ **Child Protection Code of Conducts** will be followed to ensure that behaviour with children is always respectful and protective. As discussed above, **Plan's Child Protection Policy** applying their formal child protection procedures will be followed in cases of disclosure of significant protection concerns by girls or boys during the study.
- ✓ **Confidentiality** – as a general rule confidentiality must be maintained at all times and participants' identities must be protected. All participants should be informed as part of the introductory explanation that their answers will be kept confidential. Their answers will be summarised in the analysis, but respondents will not be identified by name. Where-ever possible interviews and group discussion will be conducted in a quiet, private setting without interruptions. All information collected will be anonymous. However, in contexts where children or adults have shared positive experiences regarding their collective experiences as a Community Protection Group the consultant should discuss with them whether they want their real community name to be include, or whether anonymity is maintained. Furthermore, as per the child protection procedures, *confidentiality must never replace the need to protect children* – appropriate action must be taken if participants disclose abuse or risks of significant harm.
- ✓ **Minimise power imbalance**, and conduct the evaluation in a **non-discriminatory and inclusive way** which particularly allows the voices of some of the most marginalised girls, boys, women and men to be heard. An ethical approach acknowledges power differences between adults and children, and among adults, and ensures respect and appreciation for the contributions of all adults, young people and children, whatever their age, ability, background etc. It requires awareness and consideration of the local and national socio-cultural, religious and political context. While recognising traditional hierarchies in countries in Asia (based on age, gender and other factors) that make it harder for some women, men, girls or boys to speak up, extra efforts will be made to reach and listen to the views of girls and boys, out of school working children, children with disabilities, children of lower castes, children or families affected by HIV/ AIDs, as well as women and men from the poorest sectors of the community. Participatory methods are being used which encourage more stakeholders to express their views and experiences in a less threatening manner during group discussions. Furthermore, as described earlier special efforts will be made to meet separately with children and young people, including opportunities for some separate discussions in girls and boys groups. Adults (community protection group members, local leaders, parents/ caregivers) will be encouraged to understand the importance of providing space for children to express their own views.

- ✓ **Trust building, respect for different perspectives and openness in sharing:** It is beneficial that the field visit process enables different stakeholders to express themselves freely, without fear of negative repercussions if they share challenges or weaknesses in the programme. Thus, trust building and creating a safe, open atmosphere where everyone's views are respected is integral to the approach and the process. Clear introductions at the outset of each discussion will emphasise the importance of openness and honesty, so that we may identify the lessons learned for effective and sustainable scale up of the community based child protection programme. The study may also help to identify and build upon strengths, including traditional values and practices which enhance the protection and care of children in their families and communities.
- ✓ **Wider accountability** – this includes providing feedback on results and findings to children, communities, partners, and other stakeholders who participate, acknowledging their strengths and responding to and acting upon their concerns. A user friendly summary report (translated into local languages) will be important to ensure accountability to children, communities and other stakeholders.



## **Annex 5: Child Adult Friendly Information about Consultations on Community Based Child Protection**

### **WHAT?**

Plan International is a non-governmental organisation promoting child rights including children's right to protection from all forms of abuse, neglect, violence and exploitation. In the Asia region Plan is supporting a study across the Asia to find out more about the ways communities are protecting girls and boys. Someone will be visiting your country to meet with women, men, girls and boys to listen to your views and experiences about what is being done in your community to protect children.

### **WHY?**

- ✚ Plan would like to learn more about the different ways that adults and children can work together in communities to better protect children.
- ✚ We want to learn about the strengths, achievements, and challenges of community groups or committees that are working to improve child protection in different places - in villages and towns in different settings.
- ✚ We want to better understand the different roles and responsibilities that different people are playing - women, men, girls, boys, teachers, government officials, as well as the role of civil society organisations.
- ✚ We want to better understand how the Child Protection Committees or groups, involve children, and how they work with Child Groups or Clubs.
- ✚ We also want to better understand how the community Child Protection Groups collaborate with local officials, and government and other agencies working in your local district, province or at national level.
- We want to use all the learning to strengthen and sustain community based child protection work and national child protection work so that more children can voice their protection concerns and get protected from all forms of abuse, neglect, violence and exploitation.

### **WHERE?**

The Plan Asia study is taking place in 13 countries (Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Laos, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam). Consultants will visit five of these countries to find out even more from children and adults. These five countries include: Cambodia, Nepal, Pakistan, Timor-Leste and Vietnam. Across these four countries we hope to meet with adults and

children and young people who are involved in community based child protection work in both urban and rural communities.

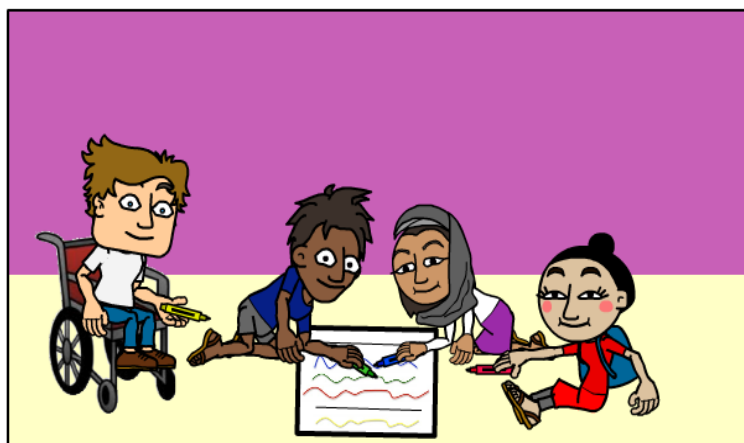
### WHEN?

The consultants will visit each of the five countries between mid April and early June. They will visit each country for 8 days, and during their visit they hope to spend one day in your community. We hope that some adults and children will have 2 - 3 hours to be able to meet to share your experiences and ideas.

In some countries we also hope to be able to invite some women, men, girls and boys representatives to join a one day workshop on community based child protection. If children and adults are invited from your community, we hope that you will be able to identify some community members - girls, boys, women and men who are actively involved in child protection activities to attend.

### WHO?

In each community the consultants are interested to meet with women, men, girls and boys of different ages and backgrounds who are involved in community based child protection work. *When meeting with children and young people all efforts will be made to make the meetings **safe, and interesting and fun to be part of.***



### HOW?

The consultants hope to visit some communities to meet with groups of women, men and children who are part of community based child protection groups. They are also interested to meet separately with groups of children (especially the most vulnerable children) who are part of Child Groups or Child Clubs in their community. During our community meetings we will use some participatory activities to explore your views about what children need protecting from; how children are being protected; and the roles of adults and children in protecting children in communities.

We also hope to be able to organise a 1 day workshop in some countries so that representatives of women, men, girls and boys from a few communities can come together to share your experiences and ideas. For this workshop we will also use interesting participatory activities and group discussions to encourage everyone to express themselves.

*If you have any other questions please ask one of the Plan staff who will be able to share your questions with the consultants who will be visiting your country.*

## Annex 6: Overview of training provided as part of CBCPS efforts, Plan in Vietnam

Date of training :	Name of training (main subject):	Who was included:	Who facilitated:	Was there a follow up training?
<i>In 2010 1493 participants (506 male and 987 females) took part in the training courses.</i>  In 2009, 2010 & 2011 training was organized in 3 provinces at district and commune level	CBCPS model	District and commune officials and collaborators	Department of Protection and Care for Children and Plan	Yes, initial training is followed up
	Child rights, Vietnam Law and policies to support vulnerable children	Provincial, district and commune officials, Child protection board members and collaborators.	DoLiSA and Plan	
	ToT on CBCPS	Child protection cadre (officers)	Department of Protection and Care for Children	
	CRC and positive discipline	CBCPS members and collaborators	Teachers (who were trained in PD)	
	Role of CBCPS, how to coordinate, case management and direct intervention	CBCPS members, collaborators and Child Group members	Plan and DoLiSA	
	Case management	CBCPs members and collaborators		
	CRC, child abuse prevention, life skills, communication and theatre for development	Children	Plan and child protection commune officers	
	Child participation and skills of working with children	Teachers		
	Child abuse prevention	DoET cadres and teachers		
	M&E tool on CBCPS	CBCP board members, headmasters, pioneers teachers	Plan and DoLiSA	
Social work (social work tasks and skills)	Child protection officials and collaborators	Plan Vietnam		