



**'Capacity building for social workers and care givers dealing
with street and working children in Myanmar'**

Phase 3.1: professional exchange and training in
Phnom Penh, Cambodia and Vientiane, Laos

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Report to UNICEF Myanmar, Child Protection Section - CNSP Project

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1. Background

There are currently a limited number of protection initiatives and services for street children in Myanmar, some initiatives have stopped due to lack of funding, interest or sensitivities. As the needs are growing due to the increase of street and working children, it is essential to build the capacity of existing local organizations to address this important issue.

UNICEF is supporting the Yangon City Development Committee and the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) to care and support street children. The Yangon City Development Task Force (including 8 Yangon City Development Police) under the Care and Discipline Department of YCDC has been formed to look out for beggars, homeless, street families including street children. YWCA is implementing a project to protect vulnerable children and youth from a life on the streets.

As per the 2006 AWP (Project 4, Activity 4.3), UNICEF has planned to train Yangon City Development Police and Social Workers who are dealing with street and working children and facilitate a professional exchange to increase their knowledge and skills in child protection and social work. The focus is on the special needs of exploited, street and working children.

Based on the initial training sessions in 2004 (Phnom Penh, Cambodia) and 2005 (Yangon, Myanmar) and the recommendations from both Friends-International and the participants, the phase 3 training programme will be implemented in collaboration with the Department of Social Welfare and other partner organizations.

UNICEF Myanmar has held a series of meetings with officials from the DSW. The DSW showed interest in continuing training for both Government agencies and other various organizations with the emphasis on the interconnectedness of behaviour change with attitude and skill development among street/working children.

UNICEF Myanmar and Friends-International are looking to build upon these initial initiatives and develop effective responses to the needs of street and working children by providing direct on-the-job training to relevant organizations and at the same time explore possible options for the future.

2. Friends-International

Friends-International is an organization based in France, with partner offices in Switzerland, Germany and in the USA. Friends-International's goal is to support street children, their families and their community to allow them to become self-sufficient, responsible and socialized adults. In order to achieve this goal, Friends-International provides technical support to organizations working with street children to ensure the sustainability of their projects. Friends-International has established a network of partner organizations over South East Asia and other regions.

Friends-International currently:

- Launches new projects and supports their localization
- Provides technical assistance to existing programs
- Supports National Governments to initiate street children projects
- Provides specific training to partner organizations
- Reinforces and develops local and international cooperation networks working for the benefit of street children
- Participates in International forums on street children issues related to their needs

Sébastien Marot, Coordinator and founder of Friends-International and of Mith Samlanh / Friends in Cambodia, received in 2003 the Order of Australia for 'Services to humanity' and in 2004 was awarded the gold medal of the Royal Government of Cambodia for the reconstruction of the country. Friends International has been recommended by UNICEF Cambodia, UNIEF EAPRO and has provided training for caregivers / social workers from other countries in the region (e.g. Lao PDR, Thailand).

3. Objectives

The objectives of phase 3.1: professional exchange and training in Phnom Penh, Cambodia and Vientiane, Laos are:

- to further improve the skills and knowledge of social workers, community-based workers and municipal police to improve their work and services by responding more adequately to the specific needs of street and working children in Myanmar and provide effective care and support to the children under their care;
- to develop a strategy on how to increase the overall quality and quantity of services and care for street and working children for accomplishing positive behavioural change to which will be agreed upon by UNICEF and key departments/ organizations;
- to provide specific recommendations to organizations and departments working on street and working children in Myanmar on how to improve their interventions and initiatives in support of the most vulnerable and exploited children.

Preparatory and consultation meetings will be held with DSW and partners from Phase 1 and 2 to select activities/services to be provided through on-site support/training and discuss the initial needs and expectations for each activity/service. This support and training from Friends-International will help further strengthen the applied knowledge and skills in dealing with vulnerable street and working children.

Friends-International will then develop recommendations on additional services needed to improve the situation of street and working children based on the work carried out with the various partners.

Therefore, the purpose of this assignment is for Friends-International to assess and provide specific on-site support and training to reinforce activities/services for vulnerable street and working children, to accomplish positive behavioural change with them and to identify further needs for these activities/services.

4. Expected outputs

Friends-International prepared, coordinated and facilitate da professional exchange visit and training programme in Phnom Penh (Cambodia) and Vientiane (Lao PDR) from 21 to 31 May 2006. 10 participants spent two weeks in Phnom Penh and Vientiane_to receive training and observe activities related to child protection and social work with vulnerable street and working children. They learned from an experienced INGO and interacted with trained social workers in Cambodia and Lao PDR. This helped strengthen their knowledge and skills in working with vulnerable children and built a team of resource persons.

5. Strategy and future actions

The capacity building program has been organized in 3 phases:

1. First phase (3.1) - Training program and professional exchange visit in Cambodia and Laos jointly with the Friends-International and UNICEF Cambodia. From 22 May to 31 May 2006.

Friends-International has:

- (a) Prepared a set of training materials for the Myanmar participants;
- (b) Arranged accommodation and in-town travel for the participants during their stay in Phnom Penh and Vientiane;
- (c) Conducted training for the Myanmar Team on skills and knowledge required to protect and support street/working children;
- (d) Arranged for the Myanmar Team to observe social work activities and programmes of the organization (e.g. Drop-in Centers, Boarding House, Drugs Drop-In Center, Transitional Home, Rehabilitation Center, Mobile Drop-in Center, Detoxification Center);
- (e) Coordinated with UNICEF Offices in Cambodia and Lao PDR to arrange visits/meetings with government and observe activities related to social work;
- (f) Prepared a report on the tasks accomplished, achievements, constraints, findings and recommendations including the training materials.

2. Future action: Second phase (3.2) - The trainers from INGO Friends-International will provide on-site specific needs-based support/training to reinforce specific skills of YCDC Police and YWCA Project social workers. From 10 August to 30 August 2006 in Phnom Penh and Yangon.

Focus will be specifically on the following:

- Preventive measures to protect the children with support from communities;
- Outreach work in the Myanmar context to reach the exploited and neglected children;
- Child / youth assessment and case management;
- Common approaches to support rules and regulations;
- Strategy on networking with service providers to strengthen the access to basic services (education, health, life skills, etc.) as well as the provision of psychosocial support and protection of street and working children;
- Monitoring and evaluation: strengthen the capacity to monitor the situation of street/working children and assess the impact of the interventions, its instruments and follow-up;
- Project design, monitoring and evaluation as well as linkages and collaboration with UN agencies, INGOs, donors.

Friends-International will:

- (a) Visit the work place of the participants and observe/assess their work activities;
- (b) Adapt existing training materials being used in Cambodia for the specific needs of participants in Myanmar, on training for YCDC Police and YWCA Project social workers;
- (c) Conduct training for social workers and care givers to reinforce specific aspects and skills to protect and support working and street children. In particular, the training will cover the above-mentioned topics, among others;
- (d) Prepare and submit to UNICEF a progress report on the accomplished tasks, achievements and constraints, including recommendations on how to improve the protection of street and working children in Myanmar.

3. Future action: Third phase (3.3) - The trainers from Friends-International will visit the project sites of the partner departments/organizations, including DSW, the YCDC and YWCA projects, and assess the progress of the activities. They will provide further assistance based on the requirements of the partner departments/organizations. From 2 November to 22 November 2006 in Phnom Penh and Yangon.

Focus will be specifically on the following:

- Preventive measures to protect the children with support from communities;
- Outreach work in the Myanmar context to reach the neediest, exploited and neglected children;
- Child / youth assessment and case management;
- Sustainable community-based mechanisms for trauma management for children, parental education, family tracing, reunification and reintegration with families in consultation with the government department(s) concerned;
- Common approaches to support rules and regulations;

6. Challenges

Participants

Department of Social Welfare (DSW)	2 Participants
Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC)	4 Participants
Department of Labour (DOL)	1 Participant
Young Women’s Christian Association	3 Participants
UNICEF:	1 Observer

Most of the participants were already involved in activities directly or indirectly working with vulnerable children and youth, and expressed the highest level of interest in the trainings and observational work provided, though differing experiences and agency backgrounds (Government field/administrative, and NGO) lead to a variation in existing knowledge skills, working priorities, and philosophies.

A number of participants showed a tendency to emphasize specific interest in activities most relevant to their current work practice rather than the broader issues.

Two of the participants were known to Friends-International through participation in previous training phases (one from phase one in Cambodia, and one from phase 2 in Myanmar), and therefore the experience for them was more relevant as a recap. It did however allow Friends-International to assess the retention of information from previous training phases through observation and their lead in working through training concepts, and their previous experience of Friends-International had a positive impact on the group and helped to build bridges.

Language issues were a concern throughout the activities as a number of participants had limited English language skills. Under these circumstances translation was very often required, and was provided by the UNICEF observer attending the training. This situation had a limiting effect on the ability of trainers to make a ‘connection’ with the participants but proved adequate to provide effective information giving.

One of the participants appeared to become increasingly apart from the rest of the group during the exchange, though the direct reasons for this were unknown.

Format

The exchange visit took place over ten days, of which eight days were applied to training and observation (other time was used as a rest day and for travel from Cambodia to Laos). The schedule for the Cambodian phase of the exchange in particular was very concentrated in order to allow the breadth of information and access to activities to occur (including night outreach observation). This allowed a relatively short time for recap, and a chance to explore concepts and activities more deeply.

The size of the group created challenges for the trainers regarding observation of projects in that it limited the involvement of individuals in the work being carried out. The group was divided to allow greater involvement in activities during night outreach, to allow a greater feel for direct social work in a challenging environment.

7. Schedule

Sunday 21 May 2006	
Day	Arrival of participants to Phnom Penh
Monday 22 May 2006 – Day 1	
09:00 – 09:30	Presentations
09:30 – 10:00	Schedule and organisation
10:30 – 12:00	Presentations of Friends-International and Mith Samlanh and q&a
14:00 - 15:30	Visit to Mith Samlanh training and education centres
15:30 – 17:00	Visit to Mith Samlanh business and home based production projects
Evening	Free time
Tuesday 23 May – Day 2	
08:30 – 12:00	Training – children and street children
13:30 – 16:00	Visit to Mith Samlanh outreach
16:00 – 17:30	Training – collaboration with government
Evening	Night outreach – group 1
Wednesday 24 May – Day 3	
08:00 – 10:00	Travel to Kampong Cham province
10:00 – 12:00	Mith Samlanh/DSAVY Safe Migration project – visit youth centre
13:30 – 14:30	Visit Safe Migration project school
14:30 – 16:00	Meeting with government representatives
Evening	Free time
Thursday 25 May 2006 – Day 4	
08:30 – 12:00	Training – Working with street children and the social worker
13:30 – 17:00	Mith Samlanh centre visits – young migrant, residential, boarding house and mobile drug centre
Evening	Night outreach – group 2

Friday 26 May 2006 – Day 5	
08:30 – 12:00	Training – outreach and centres
13:30 – 16:00	Visit – Mith Samlanh youth centres and presentation of life skills education
16:00 – 17:00	Presentation – Friends-International childsafe project
Evening	Social gathering with participants – Friends / Mith Samlanh
Saturday 27 May 2006 – Day 6	
08:30 – 12:00	Training – communication skills
Afternoon	Departure – Laos PDR
Evening	Free time
Sunday 28 May 2006 – Day 7	
Day and evening	Free time
Monday 29 May 2006 – Day 8	
08:30 – 12:00	Introduction / Schedule / Presentation Puan Mit project
13:30 – 17:00	Field visit – Puan Mit centre and the communities
Evening	Free time
Tuesday 30 May – Day 9	
08:30 – 12:00	Field visit – mobile school and activities
13:30 – 17:00	Meeting with government
Evening	Free time
Wednesday 31 May – Day 10	
08:30 – 12:00	Field visit – home based production and training
Afternoon	Departure to Myanmar

8. Contents of the training program

From 29 to 31 May 2006, field visits to the Puan Mit project in Laos were carried out. The training in Phnom Penh occurred between 22 and 27 May 2006. The following topics were discussed and explored:

CHILDREN

Topics discussed included:

- What is a child?
- Factors that can slow the physical development of a child
- Factors that can slow the intellectual development of a child
- Needs of children
- What we want is not always what we need
- The Maslow hierarchy of needs

STREET CHILDREN

Topics included:

- What is a street child?
 - street living children
 - street working children
 - children of street families
- Reasons why children live / work on the streets
- Trends

WORKING WITH STREET / WORKING CHILDREN

Topics included:

- Reasons for working with street and working children
- Working with street and working children is holistic

THE SOCIAL WORKER

Topics included:

- Personal qualities of the social worker
- Basic knowledge of the social worker
- Social workers are not superman / superwoman
- How a social worker should present him / herself
- Code of conduct

COMMUNICATION

Topics included:

- Types of communication
- Communication = listening + talking

COMMUNICATING WITH STREET / WORKING CHILDREN

Topics included:

- Use of communication with street and working children
- To do and not to do
- Listening to children
- Profile of the 'good' social worker
- How children communicate
- Reasons children do not tell the truth immediately

OUTREACH

Topics included:

- Why outreach is needed
- How to organise an outreach visit
- Objectives of outreach

CENTER-BASED ACTIVITIES

Topics included:

Participants designed their own centre

- Different types of centres
- Services to be available in centres
- What kind of centre to open
- Inviting children to your centre
- How to run a centre
- Basic rules of a centre

COLLABORATION WITH GOVERNMENT

Topics included:

Friends-International experiences in collaboration with Government agencies

- Why collaboration can be needed / beneficial
- Government and NGO objectives in service provision
- Mechanisms for collaboration

9. Results

- (a) Strengthen participants knowledge and skills in working with vulnerable children and build a team of resource persons

The exchange participants showed through their participation and through their questioning and exploration of concepts that their knowledge base to protect vulnerable children was improved. Participants attending from previous training phases also were able to express retention of knowledge and skills. Participants already active within programs in Myanmar showed a particular enthusiasm in expressing their ideas in relation to their own experiences. Participants were active in expressing areas of high interest and activities perceived as less relevant to their defined roles.

- (b) Prepare a set of training materials for the Myanmar participants

Appropriate materials have been developed for training and preparations were made to provide the groundwork tools for the support and protection of street / working children, and to key in to further developmental training during further phases of activity.

- (c) Arrange accommodation and in-town travel for the participants during their stay in Phnom Penh and Vientiane;

Accommodation and in-town travel organized and used at both locations. Participants expressed satisfaction of arrangements.

- (d) Conduct training for the Myanmar Team on skills and knowledge required to protect and support street/working children;

A training package was devised and delivered to provide appropriate groundwork skills in the protection and support of street and working children, and to key in to further training during phases 3.2 and 3.3. A set of training material was handed over to UNICEF representative on departure.

- (e) Arrange for the Myanmar Team to observe social work activities and programmes of the organization (e.g. Drop-in Centers, Boarding House, Drugs Drop-In Center, Transitional Home, Rehabilitation Center, Mobile Drop-in Center, Detoxification Center);

The participants were able to visit social work activities and make on site visits to street child projects in both Cambodia and Laos, with an emphasis on activities with potential for application in the Myanmar context, or in the context of showing sound application of social work and other relevant skills.

- (f) Coordinate with UNICEF Offices in Cambodia and Lao PDR to arrange visits/meetings with government and observe activities related to social work;

Participants were able to access and meet with government agencies in Cambodia and Laos, with an emphasis on agencies involved in collaboration to provide direct support and protection of street and working children, and to show evidence of effective inter-agency linkages to provide services.

10. Participants evaluation

The participants were asked to provide a final evaluation of the training and the outcomes are as follows (formal evaluation sheets were distributed to participants, 10 participant's submitted returns):

1. Did you find the training useful?

All respondents expressed the training to be very useful or useful.

2. Which parts of the training did you find most useful?

Most respondents appeared to find the field visit element to the training beneficial, with particular emphasis placed on the usefulness of learning about prevention and outreach activities. Mobile school, vocational training, centre based work, home based production, and Government collaboration were also expressed as most useful.

3. Which parts of the training did you find least useful?

Most of the respondents expressed that all aspects of the training were useful. Training issues expressed as least useful included reintegration, vocational training, and outreach activities.

4. Are there any subjects you wish to know more about?

A number of subjects were expressed, with a particular emphasis on centre based work, and also vocation training and childsafe. Other subjects included: case management, reintegration, prevention, and social work support to children.

5. How would you rate the style of presentation?

Most respondents expressed the style of presentation to be good or very good, while 2 respondents expressed style as 'OK'.

6. How would you rate the location of the training.

Most respondents expressed that location was very good, good, or 'OK', while one respondent felt that the location was too basic.

11. Recommendations for the future

Recommendation from the participants

Exchange participants were asked to make recommendations regarding the future needs within the framework of this project. All participants expressed that future phases of the project should occur, and that the framework of a collaborative effort between UNICEF, Friends-International, Government and NGO agencies should be maintained. Participants suggested that a focus should be placed upon the following:

- Development of direct services and activities to vulnerable youth
- Staff and project management
- Social work training.

Participants felt that Friends-International should be able to provide an on-going training resource, and direct technical assistance role over time, and also provide assistance with data collection and survey work. A special emphasis was placed on specific support to develop vocational skills training programs.

Participants suggested that Friends-International staff should visit specific working environments and active projects to which the participants are involved to provide direct technical support in the working context.

Participants also stated that there should be an acknowledgement that not all of the projects, programs, and working processes are relevant to the Myanmar setting, and that there should be some emphasis on processes that have proved less, or not successful as a learning experience for all.

There was a particular emphasis placed on the fact that any future collaboration should be based on the philosophy that Government will be the leading partner as it has ultimate responsibility to provide services to its citizens.

Recommendations from Friends-International

During the training various topics were covered and discussed. At all times, the trainers encouraged the participants to think about the Myanmar context and to think about how to apply the newly acquired skills to this national context.

Some constraints came up for the Myanmar context:

- Outreach
This training phase reiterated the problems associated with developing street based outreach programs, both government and other agencies have continued to express doubts as to its application within the Myanmar setting as it has been observed within the context of Cambodia and Laos PDR.
The development of a different, community based approach would need to be developed to reach vulnerable children and youth, for example within work places.
- Reintegration / Placement
Further to constraints regarding reintegration and placement during previous phases of training, clear constraints still exist for the effective application of these essential tools.
Reintegration does not seem to be seen as a high priority among participants, who appear most interested in applying direct services for immediate vulnerability issues. Only vocational skills training is given as an area of interest within this context. Greater effort needs to be placed on the need for effective reintegration strategies.

There are a number of initiatives that could be taken from here. The following suggestions can be taken individually or integrated into a wider strategy:

- Field training with identified agencies to develop skills relevant to specific working practices and also ongoing assessment of performance with an emphasis on assessment of existing work/programs carried out with street and working children and associated training.
- The development of in-depth training for vulnerability based assessment and reintegration skills through field, informal, and formal processes. Providing support to the development of inter-agency cooperation leading to the establishing of a network, and promoting common strategies through advocacy and training.
- Develop the capacity of Volunteer Social Workers and its network for all the reintegration / placement work through a specific formal training
- Develop and support the network of identified GO / NGOs and support active collaboration on specific issues, sharing of experiences and topic-specific training sessions
- Facilitate the development of general standards of procedures for working with Street and Working Children in collaboration with all relevant agencies that can be applied by all agencies working in that field
- Develop advocacy and awareness at all levels (children, families, communities, local authorities, central authorities) to progressively facilitate the development of services for street / working children