SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR CHILDREN IN DIFFICULT SITUATIONS

Lessons from Indonesia and ASEAN

(Perlindungan Sosial bagi Anak dalam Situasi Sulit: Pelajaran dari Indonesia dan ASEAN)

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ABSTRAKSI

Sebagaimana dinyatakan dalam Konvensi PBB mengenai Hak-hak Anak, masyarakat melalui tata kepemerintahan yang baik (good governance), harus dapat menjamin bahwa anak terlindungi dari segala bentuk perlakuan salah (abuse) dan eksploitasi. Perlindungan sosial sangat penting terutama bagi anak-anak yang hidup dalam situasi-situasi sulit, seperti anak-jalanan, buruh anak, anak yang dilacurkan, anak dengan kecacatan, dan anak yang terlibat konflik bersenjata. Makalah ini dirancang untuk mendiskusikan pertanyaan sebagai berikut: skema perlindungan sosial seperti apa yang dapat dikembangkan untuk melindungi anak-anak dari perlakuan salah, pengabaian dan eksploitasi?

Setelah pengantar, bagian dua makalah ini membahas secara ringkas mengenai kerangka konseptual perlindungan sosial. Selain dikaji jenis-jenis perlindungan sosial formal (asuransi sosial dan bantuan sosial) dan non-formal (skema berbasis masyarakat), bagian ini juga menjelaskan pendekatan perlindungan anak berbasis hak (rights-based approach). Bagian tiga mengkaji beberapa pelajaran utama dari Program CNSP (Anak yang Membutuhkan Perlindungan Khusus) Plan Internasional Indonesia guna mengetahui karakteristik anak yang hidup dalam situasi sulit dan melihat sejauh mana peran Lembaga Swadaya Masyarakat (LSM) dalam merespon isu dan masalah yang dihadapi anak-anak dalam situasi sulit. Bagian empat kemudian mengidentifikasi sistem perlindungan sosial yang diterapkan di 10 negara anggota ASEAN. Makalah ini ditutup oleh kesimpulan dan rekomendasi kebijakan yang disajikan pada bagian lima.

INTRODUCTION

Social protection has been gaining importance in the new policy trend amongst the ASEAN Member Counties (AMCs) since the Financial Crisis. The main reasons are economic and demographic structural changes, continuing effects of the crisis on the economy, and experiences brought by the recent tsunami disaster (ASEAN Secretariat, 2004; Suharto, et al,

2006). It is also now widely accepted that social protection can lead to more equitable growth by smoothing income fluctuation and broadening access to human capital development. Many countries in ASEAN have demonstrated strong commitment to the provision of basic education and health services, but this is declining since the economic crisis hit the region in the late-1990s. Child and youth well-being, for example, is heavily affected by the recent economic crisis and subsequent geographic disaster. Under conditions of crisis, most families are unable to provide basic needs for their children such as primary education, health care services and social protection.

As defined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, society, through good governance, must provide measures to ensure that the child is protected from all forms of abuse and exploitation. Social protection is especially paramount to protect Children living in Dificult Situations (CDS), such as street children, child labour, child prostitution (particularly among young girls), children with disabilities, and children under armed conflict (Suharto and Thamrin, 2007). In many countries, investment in children is a key factor in poverty reduction and economic growth. However, it is usually a small proportion of national budgets, although evidence shows that the small investments currently made bring considerable future benefits to society as a whole.

This paper is designed to discuss what social protection schemes can be developed to protect children from abuse, neglect and exploitation? After briefly reviewing the conceptual framework of social protection in section two, section three of this paper delineates some key lessons from Children in Need of Special Protection (CNSP) Programme of Plan International to understand characteristics of CDS as well as roles of Non Government Organisations (NGOs) in response to issues and problems faced by CDS. Section four then identifies child protection systems applied in ten ASEAN Member Countries (AMCs). Conclusions and policy recommendations are provided in the last section.

APPROACHES

This paper is generated and developed from two projects. The first project is entitled "MidTerm Evaluation on Children in Need of Social Protection' funded by Plan International Indonesia in collaboration with Plan International the Netherlands. Serving as consultant and main researcher, I employed descriptive and qualitative approaches in this evaluation research. Assisted by Juni Thamrin and Ajeng Purnama, primary and secondary data were collected through in-depth interviews, focused group discussions and desk review of literature and related documents. Fieldwork has been done in Jakarta and Surabaya to visit selected Plan partners and was accomplished for two months, between August and September 2007. While in Jakarta such NGOs as SPMAA (Sumber Pendidikan Mental Agama Allah), PKBI (Perkumpulan Keluarga Berencana Indonesia) and ICODESA (Institute for Community Development and Social Advocacy) have been visisted and observed, in Surabaya PUSHAM UNAIR (Pusat Hak Azasi Manusia Universitas Airlangga), SCCC (Surabaya Children Crisis Centre) and Genta Foundation were approached. The six NGOs focus their intervention on four types of CNSP, namely street children, child labour, children in conflict with the law (CCL) and commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) or prostituted children. Involving a number of participants or informants, interviews and focused group discussions were conducted with staffs of the six NGOs and beneficiaries including children and their parents.

The second project is entitled "Strengthening Social Protection Systems in ASEAN" funded by European Union in collaboration with ASEAN Secretariat. As social policy expert and consultant for Galway Development Services International (GDSI), Ireland, I led a team consisting of myself, Juni Thamrin, Michael Cuddy, and Eamonn Moran to conduct the project. Involving desk review, questionnaires and interviews with a number of focal points of ASEAN communities, the project was done between June 2005 and June 2006 in ten AMCs, which are grouped into three clusters, namely (1) Advanced Countries (Singapore, Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia); (2) Emerging Countries (Indonesia, The Philippines and Thailand); and (3) Transition Countries (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Viet Nam).

SOCIAL PROTECTION

Social protection is an important element in social policy strategies for eradicating poverty and reducing multidimensional deprivation (Suharto, 2006). In a broader sense, social protection could be described as all public and private initiatives that provide income or consumption transfers to the poor, protect the vulnerable against livelihood risks, and enhance the social status and rights of marginalised groups within any given country (Suharto, 2007).

Social protection refers to processes, policies and interventions, and entities like the government, private sector and civil society who respond to the economic, political, and security risks faced by a region's population, particularly those categorised as the poor and vulnerable (Suharto, 2007). As an approach, social protection consists of all interventions from the public and private sectors, together with community-based organisations to support individuals, households and communities in preventing, managing and overcoming risks and vulnerabilities (John, 2002; von Hauff, 2002; Shepherd et al 2004).

Mechanisms of social protection should essentially be used to specifically target the very poor and vulnerable groups in a particular society and enable them to build up their assets so as to escape the threat of poverty in a sustainable way and to withstand the shocks of future crises and changes to their social and economic status in a given society (ADB, 2004). Social protection include formal and non-formal schemes ranging from social insurance and social assistance to community-based schemes. Social insurance and social assistance can generally be included as the formal schemes, while community-based schemes can be referred to as a kind of informal social protection (Suharto, 2006; Suharto 2007).

Social insurance programmes mitigate risks by providing income support in the event of illness, disability, work injury, maternity, unemployment, old age, and death. The funding of social insurance schemes requires a contributory approach, which is based on the payment of premiums each year.

Social assistance schemes are designed to enhance social welfare by reducing poverty directly. Social assistance involves the provision of welfare and social services to highly vulnerable groups, cash or in-kind transfers such as food-stamps and family allowances and temporary subsidies such as life-line tariffs, housing subsidies, or support of lower prices of staple food in times of crisis.

Community-based schemes refer to micro- and area-based safety nets aimed at protecting communities in particular locations and rapidly emerging economic sectors as necessary means of providing social security to those most in need. Examples of such informal mechanisms for coping with difficulties include borrowings; drawing down savings; selling assets; mutual support from family and friends; reciprocal arrangements with local wealthier households; and seeking additional income-producing activities (i.e. the black market).

Social protection is a term used interchangeably in the literature with social policy, social welfare and/or social security, but seems increasingly to be used as a generic term going beyond the alternatives. According to Juan Somavia, the Director General of the International Labour Office (ILO), social protection is about people and families having security in the face of vulnerabilities and contingencies. It is having access to health care, and it is about working in safety. But we are far from realizing the ideal of adequate social protection as a right for all (Kamerman and Gabel, 2006).

Many of the major international organisations have now adopted rights-based approaches to their programme development. According to Ray and Carter (2007), child rights-based approaches (CRBA) are particularly important when working with children in the poorest and most difficult situations. The authors argue that the dynamics that exclude them from participating equitably in society are generally reproduced in the course of welfare approaches to development. Child rights-based approaches, with their emphasis on inclusion and non-discrimination, require specific efforts to be made to identify children most at risk, facilitate their participation and address their particular issues.

As shown in Figure 1, child centred rights-based approaches view children in the context of their relationships with their families, peers and the wider society as shown in the diagram, each of the different actors having complementary rights and responsibilities and playing their role in the realisation of children's rights.

Viewing children in the poorest and most difficult situations in the context of their relationships and wider society is particularly important (Ray and Carter, 2007). Many children live without the support of parents and in societies in which their exclusion is systematic and institutionalised. It is therefore necessary to understand the roles of different actors and institutions in the lives of these children. As well as family members these include peers and other adults such as employers, teachers, police and gang leaders. It is also necessary to understand how children are viewed by local and national government in terms of the legislative framework, social policy and programmes and budgetary allocations and how they are treated by institutions such as the health and education services and the judicial system.
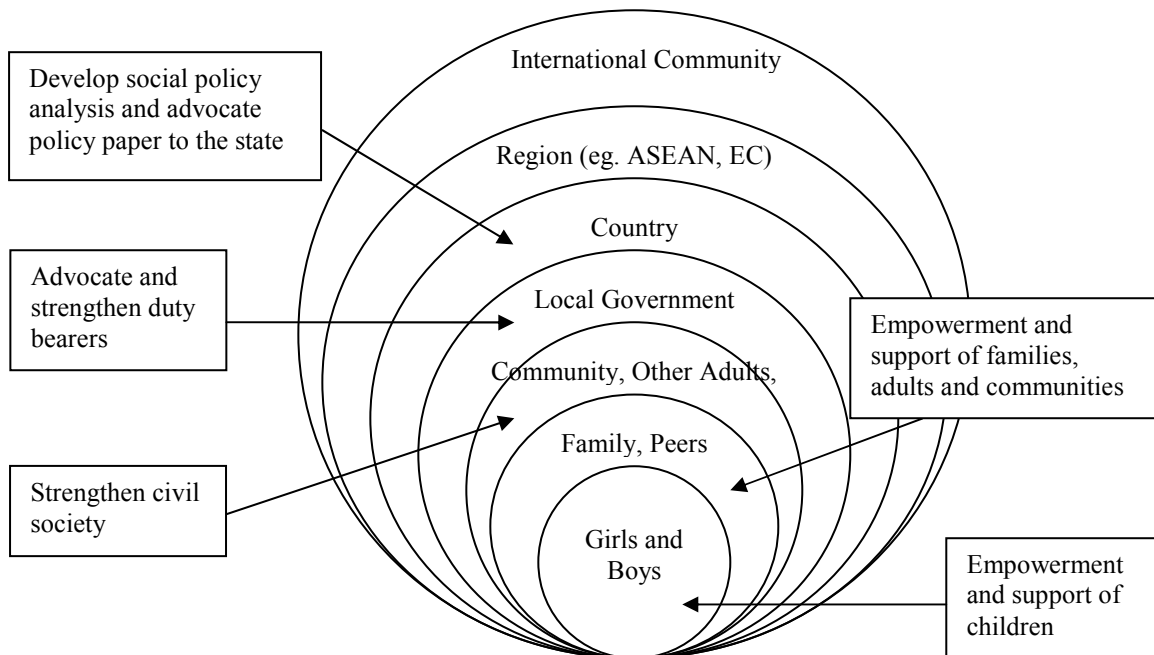
Figure 1: Child Centerd, Rights-Based Approaches in the Context of their Families, Communities and Wider Society
Source: adapted and modified from Ray and Carter (2007: 40)
For the purposes of this paper, I will view child centred rights-based approaches as having the following main operational elements (Ray and Carter, 2007):

Empowerment and support of children to know their rights and responsibilities, to shape their own lives in positive ways, to participate in their society and claim their rights in a manner that is safe and appropriate to their situation and evolving capacities.

Empowerment and support of parents, other adult care givers and communities to know and exercise their responsibilities towards children, participate in their society and to claim their rights to those who have duties towards them.

Advocate for the local, national and international authorities to fulfil their duties towards children, their families and communities and support and strengthen them in doing this where appropriate.

Strengthen local and national civil society to work for the rights of children. These operational elements look at how to work with children in the poorest and most difficult situations. They emphasise the primary role of those who have the main responsibilities for the well-being of children – children themselves, families, communities, local and national government. The role of child-focused organisations is to help strengthen these primary actors to claim their rights and take up their responsibilities towards children and to monitor progress towards the realisation of children's rights.

CHILDREN IN DIFFICULT SITUATIONS: LESSONS FROM CNSP PROGRAMME OF PLAN INDONESIA

When the financial crisis hit Indonesia in the 1998, a heavy reliance on traditional family-based social protection systems led to the failure of Indonesian government to respond it effectively (Suharto and Thamrin, 2007).

In the lead up to the financial crisis, the majority of the Indonesian citizens, particularly those working in the shadow economy, were not covered by formal social protection schemes, especially children. The traditional social protection systems proved to be poorly adapted to the demands of a market economy and, in particular, the gradual erosion of family and community networks undermined the very basis of those traditional safety nets. Within that situation children in many areas in Indonesia were affected. Many of them have been working in 'danger' areas that need special protection.

Plan Indonesia is an international agency which has worked with children in need of special protection. Since 1997 Plan started its first project with street children in Surabaya, East Java. In 1998, Plan started a programme to support child workers at the dump-site in Makassar, South Sulawesi. This was followed by a number of other projects addressing child labour, commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) or prostituted children and children in conflict with the law in the Capital City of Jakarta.

Programme of Children in Need of Special Protection (CNSP) is one of the Plan interventions which is fundamentally designed to improve the situation of those children who are already in need of special protection with the intention not to make them more vulnerable to additional violation of their rights.

The CNSP programme aims to enhance ongoing activities with children living in the poorest and most difficult situation yet it also aims at achieving a greater impact on the lives of these children by strengthening networks with local NGOs, INGOs, and Government Departments and through capacity building to service providers, policy reform, children's participation and child case monitoring. Specific objectives of the CNSP programme are to:

Increase the status of basic health and life skills of children in need of special protection;
Strengthen the capacities of local NGOs and partners to facilitate children participation, community-based social integration, legal advice, referral systems and STD/AIDS prevention; and
Improve local government's commitment and support in the programmes and undertake policy reforms to protect children in need of special protection.

Characteristics of CDS

Generally, people tend to perceive that Children in Difficult Situations (CDS) are among the bad member of society (Suharto and Thamrin, 2007). They are often referred to as having only evil characteristics and hence have no potentials for development. Nevertheless, the above stereotypes are not always the case.

It was found that CDS have to some extent 'positive' characters such as brave or courageous, creative and independent compared to other children. Solidarity is also high among CDS. However, due to their low socio-economic background and poor environments, some CDS show such unconstructive behavior as pessimistic and low self-confidence. Street and prostituted children, for instance, tend to have instant behavior in the sense that they want to fulfill their needs straight away which sometime do not conform acceptable norms.

There are major contributing factors explaining why a number of children in Jakarta and Surabaya become CDS. While poverty and low level of family education are among the two interrelated key determinants, domestic violence, neglect and lack of attention from family, negative effect of environment, drug abuse, and stigma are also apparent.

High school dropout, domestic violence and violence in the environment are the most critical issues found among street children. Issues such as physical and sexual abuse, economic exploitation, consumerism, and high risks of STD/AIDS are evident among prostituted children. Sexual myths was also found and make prostituted children more vulnerable to additional violation of their rights. For example, it was told that while doing sexual intercourse with prostituted children, men in Rawa Malang, Jakarta often put horse tail hairs in their penis. It is believed that such a practice will make optimum stimulation and orgasm to the children. In fact, this creates wound in the vagina of children.

For children in conflict with the law, especially those living in jail, the crucial issues affecting and even degrading their life are limited facilities and budget for education/vocational training and health services, no specific facilities for children with disabilities/specific needs, no specific treatment/approach for imprisoned children according to their accuse, and no staff of prison who have social work and psychology background.

Roles of NGOs

In response to CDS issues, NGOs of Plan's partners are supposed to implement programmes to four categories of CDS.

Street children. There are at least three NGOs focusing their activities on street children: SPMAA, PUSHAM UNAIR, and Genta Foundation;
Children in conflict with the law. PKBI and SCCC are partners of Plan working with children in conflict with the law;
Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) or prostituted children. ICODESA is an organisation focusing specifically on addressing issues of prostituted children, although programmes of SPMAA and Genta Foundation are also related to some extent to this issue; and
Child labor. Evaluation in two cities of Jakarta and Surabaya, however, did not find any local partners of Plan dealing specifically and significantly with child labour issues.

In general, CNSP programme through collaboration with a local NGO has made contributions to the process of empowerment at the level of children, implementing partners, stakeholders, and issue mainstreaming (Suharto and Thamrin, 2007). The programme has increased participation and did provide support to the fulfillment of needs and protection required by CNSP especially in an urgent situation. While the programme can protect them from violation of their rights, it also provides support to livelihood skills for income

generating, health services, and law protection. In turn, it has also made notable contributions to strengthen civil society in amplifying child rights through talkshows, mass media, and discussion forums.

Implementation of CNSP programme is especially adequate at the protective domain, notably in dealing with the issue of children in conflict with the law. A number of NGOs (eg. SPMAA and PUSHAM UNAIR) has developed programmes in the forms of preventive measures, but their coverage and impacts are still limited. In terms of issue in protective domain, after detention is one of the most critical issues found among children in conflict with the law.

In addition to stigma, lack of motivation and vocational trainings during children in jail make children and those already grown-up difficult to adapt to new environment when they go out of the prison. Besides, better condition in prison as a result of the success of 'child friendly jail" programme sometimes creates unintended effect and traps the children into a "comfortable zone". This case, noted in Children Jail Tangerang as part of PKBI Jakarta target, often makes children reluctant to face new situation outside the prison.

In the preventive domain, especially with reference to ADITUKA programme of SPMAA, the issue is relating to Plan's future plan to change its strategy to be more directly touching CBO rather than collaborating with NGO partners. This issue raise questions about the capacity of community-based organisations (CBOs) in implementing programmes without assistance of NGO due to limited facilities and networking capacity of CBOs in the area of evaluation. Even though a CBO has adeqaute facilities and capacities, the question is that are staffs of Plan sufficient to organise and facilitate directy CBOs, particularly if the number reaches in hundreds?

It is evident that almost all implementing partners are focusing heavily on micro issues of CDS. Without macro strategy involving changes in structural and policy context, micro approach is hardly able to contribute significanty to improve living condition of children. It was also found that almost all programmes run by partner NGOs are still partial, *ad hoc* and unsustainable. This is strikingly caused by long and uncertain postponement of grant from Plan to NGOs. Limited budget and networking of NGOs tend to limit the capacity of NGOs in reaching target groups and enlarging the coverage. While the number total beneficiaries of NGOs is relatively small, no one of partner NGOs in Jakarta and Surabaya dealing with the fourth type of CDS that is, child labor.

CHILD PROTECTION: LESSONS FROM ASEAN

In ASEAN there is a wide range of interventions of child protection that incorporate both preventive and curative measures. Investment in children in responding to the above issues, however, represents only a small proportion of national budget amongst the AMCs, compared to the expenditure on defence (Suharto, et al 2006).

The Issues

The main problems faced in child protection area are child abuse and poverty. The four main types of abuse are physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, and various forms of neglect. It was

noted that the majority of lower income groups were lacking access to social protection system for their children in all AMCs. The phenomenon that mostly occurred in this group was neglect of children due to both parents' need to be in full-time employment, and this is particularly prevalent among migrant workers. Malnutrition in children due to poverty still remained a problem in most AMCs except Brunei Darussalam, Myanmar and Singapore (Suharto, et al, 2006).

Another serious issue is child labour, including the worst forms of child labour like child prostitution, forced labour, slavery etc. However, beside general protection, children (13-15 years old) working due to their family's insufficient economic conditions also should also receive social protection. In line with the provisions covered in the ILO Convention No. 182 on The Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour, children should only be allowed to do light work in the daytime and out of school-time, or work as a means to express their talents and/or interests.

Interestingly, the number of street children found in most AMCs is triggered not only by the poverty, but also by the domestic violence occurring in their surroundings. In some cases, children neglect is due to drug or substance abuser parents. In most AMCs, parents faced the impossible task of providing enough protection for their children. Closest relatives and families of these young persons who were entrusted with their care were often not able to provide adequate protection. The young persons consequently made good escape from constant harassment and violence from their families by going onto the streets. The next step in this cycle produced young offenders.

HIV and AIDS have also separated parents from their children. Losing the guidance of their parents leave children very vulnerable to exploitation. The exploitation of children mostly occurred in conditions where children are forced to work. Child trafficking, child labour and child exploitation for commercial purpose, for instance, are unfortunately highly evident in most AMCs. Regarding gender issue in child protection, some AMCs experience conditions where more social supports are available for boys than girls, (i.e. by monks in Indonesia, Lao PDR, Vietnam and Cambodia provide a lot of informal support for boys in many of these countries). In Lao PDR and Vietnam, gender bias can also be seen in the national education systems, where young girls have fewer opportunities available to them, especially in higher education.

In the transition countries of ASEAN, child protection programmes are still given less attention. The high child dependency ratios indicate the need to provide social protection for children. In Cambodia, for instance, there is a need to focus on combating child labour and trafficking. In their National Poverty Reduction Strategy (NPRS 2003-2005), it is mentioned that there were several strategies being taken by the government. It started with the promotion of law enforcement regarding child protection, followed by an increased coordinating mechanism for combating sexual trafficking and the establishment of five new transit sites.

It is also acknowledged that Cambodia has become a transport hub for the trafficking of women and children. There are estimated to be 88,000 trafficked Cambodian women in Thailand and between 40-60 per cent of sex workers (14,000) in Cambodia were forced or tricked into the business (NPRS 2003-2005). Other young girls turn to the sex industry as they have few viable alternatives. Poverty, social upheaval, underdeveloped legal infrastructure and weak law enforcement are all contributing to the rapid growth of the sex industry and trafficking of women and children.

The Responses

In light of these persistent problems, all AMCs have already had national action plans to implement child protection programmes that provide protection of the rights of the children (Suharto, et al, 2006). They also provide provision of financial assistance and welfare assistance services. The ten AMCs have ratified the ILO Conventions on child protection and are therefore promoting and regulating childcare services, minimum age of employment and eliminating the children involved in the worst forms of labour.

As part of governments' commitment to support child protection, Malaysia, the Philippines, Cambodia, Singapore and Indonesia have also developed specific community-based programmes for child protection. Malaysia, for example, has provided a child protection team in every village.

Another significant action launched by Myanmar is establishing training for childcare services. Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore have provided good basic services and adequate protection for children, including the basic law for child protection (Suharto, et al, 2006).

In order to prevent children becoming involved in the worst forms of child labour due to economic conditions and/or poverty, the Indonesian government is empowering its family economy through informal training for working children and for their family. These programmes are designed around the use of revolving funds for their families to run small scale business/ home industries; and some efforts have also been made to strengthen national policy and raise awareness on the need to abolish the worst forms of child labour throughout many of the country's regions (Suharto, et al, 2006).

Brunei Darussalam

Brunei Darussalam complies with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on 23rd December 1995. Prior to the CRC, Brunei Darussalam had started drafting laws to enhance the position of children in a wide range of areas.

Brunei Darussalam has also passed the Children Order 2000 to further protect the welfare of children, particularly the abused and neglected children. This order also provides that the best interest of the child shall always be of paramount consideration when any question arises with respect to the welfare of the child. In addition, Islamic Family Law was passed in 1999, and makes provisions regulating laws relating to Muslim families.

This particular legislation also includes matters pertaining to maintenance and guardianship or custody of children. The Islamic Adoption of Children and Adoption of Children Orders 2001, which both came into force on 26 March 2001, make provision to regulate the adoption of Muslim children in Brunei Darussalam.

With regard to strengthening mechanisms for coordinating policies relating to children, the National Children's Council was established and officially launched on 18 January 2001. It is also tasked with establishing monitoring rules and regulations pertaining to children. The council consists of members from the government sector, the private sector as well as NGOs.

Singapore

In October 1995, by acceding to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Singapore made a commitment to meet the minimum standards in the provision of health care, education, legal and social services for children. In many areas, provision for Singapore children was already well above these standards, but the principle of "in the best interests of the child" has since guided and further improved Singapore's policies and service provision for children and young persons, including the area of child protection.

Singapore has developed services and programmes dedicated to children abused under the Child Protection Services (CPS), which include Case Management, Specialised Counselling and Intervention Programmes, Programmes by Psychologists, Psychiatric Programmes, Enable A Family Volunteer Schemes, Practical and financial Assistance, Foresting Service, Kinship Care and Family Care Programmes, and Placement in Residential Care.

The FamCare scheme, for example, taps into kinship support to provide care for child abuse victims when alternative care arrangements need to be made. Care provided by relatives can often reduce the fear and anxiety of the child, as the child is usually more familiar with relatives than with an unrelated family.

The Philippines

In the Philippines, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) has enacted a total of eight national policies, inclusive of the Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD). It is designed to enhance the quality and coverage of essential health, nutrition, psychosocial development and early education services of Filipino children aged 0 to 6 years. These policies cover issues such as employment of children, child abuse and discrimination, and international and domestic adoption.

Community participation is being harnessed in the services. The DSWD has devolved to LGUs, such as family and women's welfare; whilst it is also implied in child and youth welfare, through the institution of community-based services. Its key programme for poverty alleviation, managed by the national office, applies community organisation before services, and is delivered to the community, which they themselves pick out as relevant to their needs (Bautista, 2002).

To strengthen the policy climate to protect children's rights, the Philippines has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Children in 1990, the ILO Optional Protocols 138 and 182 in 1998. The Philippines is also committed to other international instruments like as the Convention on Discrimination Against Women, Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and World Fit For Children.

The end goal is to move towards international cooperation and partnership in upholding children's rights; such cooperation includes advocacy, prevention strategies and provision of special interventions to children in need of special protection.

As part of the Philippines government's commitment to the different international instruments, national framework/plans have been developed to guide local chief executive programme developers and other stakeholders. These include the following:

Philippines National Strategic Framework for Plan Development for Children (Child 21) **-** A strategic framework using the lifecycle perspective for planning programmes and interventions that promote and safeguard the rights of the Filipino Children.

National Plan of Action for Children (NPAC) **-** Concentrizes the vision of child 21 into clear, action able and time bound plans within a shorter 5-year time frame.

Framework of Action Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation (FA-CSEC) – serves as a roadmap for any action, initiative or endeavour of LGUs, NGOs, National government from prevention to rehabilitation of children who become victims of commercial sexual exploitation of any form of sexual abuse.

Medium Term Statistics Framework for the Girl Child – This is the Philippines's concrete response to the Beijing Platform for action on the girl child.

To address specific problems on children with the goal of upholding their rights for the best welfare and interests, the government, in partnership with various NGO's, has taken important legislative and organisational initiatives for the protection of children in need of social protection. As a result, the several laws were enacted.

Republic Act 7610 (Special Protection of Children Against Child Abuse Exploitation and Discrimination Act) as amended by RA 7658, for example, declares as a State policy the provision to children of special protection from all forms of abuse, neglect, cruelty, exploitation and discrimination and requires the formulation of a comprehensive government programmes on child abuse, exploitation, and discrimination.

The Philippine's government has also developed programmes and services to strengthen the policy climate to protect children's rights. Programmes and services launched by the government include Early Childhood Care and Development, Pre-school Programme (Expanded Pre-school Education Programme); bright Child Campaign, Supplemental Feeding Programme, Food for School Programme, national Programme for Child Labour, National Programme for Street Children, Sexual Abuse and Commercial Exploitation of Children, Special Protection and Assistance to Children Without Primary Caregivers, Centre and Community Bases Programme for Children in Conflict with the Law, Children in Various Circumstances of Disability, Children as Zone of Peace, Community-based Strategies for the prevention, management and Alleviation of the problems associated with HIV/AIDS infection, and Violence Against Children.

The Philippines launched its Food for School Programme, a provision of one kilo of rice per child. Distribution is based on the attendance of each child in the day care centres and in schools with the highest Grade 1 enrolment in 55 provinces, covering the most depressed barangays, in the 5th and 6th class municipalities, including cities and municipalities in Metro Manila. The Philippines also provides the best alternatives to family care for children in conflict with the law, children in various circumstances of disability, children in situations of armed conflict, children with HIV/AIDS and other children in various circumstances of disability.

Thailand

The government of Thailand has been developing some similar policies to implement the UN Convention on the rights of the children. Child protection in this country is designed to protect children from abuse, the illicit use of drugs, and economic and sexual exploitation. This protection is needed due to the fact that children are one of the vulnerable groups experiencing a wide range of abuses and mistreatment from both within and outside the family.

The Convention seeks to address this vulnerability by requiring member states to assert the children rights in their national policies for child protection (Davies, 2000). In response to this concern, the Thai government includes children as the target group in its social security act in the form of child allowance. This benefit is provided for insured persons (Pongsapich, 2002). Together with the old-age pension, this scheme was introduced in December 1999 with the actual contribution rate being set at 2 per cent (1 per cent each from the employer and the employee) for 1999; 4 per cent from 2000; and increased to 6 per cent from 2001 (Asher: 2000).

In addition, the Ministry of Education has cooperated with UNICEF to launch some projects denouncing child trafficking and providing scholarships for children who remain in or come back to school.

CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Lessons from CNSP programme are compelling messages that the ollaborative actions between Plan and NGOs partners in CNSP Programme has successfully contributed to the improvement of the status of basic health, education, and livelihood among CNSP.

Nevertheless, there are several challenges occur during the implementation – such as coverage limitations; still concentrating at micro level; uncertain information flows and limitation of comprehensive and sustainable intervention in the area children in the conflict with the law.

One of the key lessons learned from Plan projects was that originally Plan only addressed the micro issues of children in need of special protection and had not (yet) taken a holistic view of the issue. Through collaboration with a local NGO, Plan did provide support to prostituted children offering skills training for income generating. Plan did not, however, deal with the issue of HIV/AIDS. More fundamentally Plan failed to address the underlying causes that lead to children being prostituted or abused.

In addition, the interventions were *ad hoc* and depended heavily on the strategy and capacity of the partner NGOs. Under livelihood, education and or health sectors, Plan Indonesia's regular programmes in the "sending area" of rural communities can prevent children from becoming CNSP.
Nevertheless, Plan often fails to identify and adequately address underlying causes of the problems. This is also attributed to the fact that the CNSP focus in and around urban areas.

The crisis adversely affected all three Clusters of AMCs. Whilst the severity of the impact varied across countries, the impact was not the same across geographical areas and social groups within individual countries (e.g., urban households compared to rural ones, factory workers compared to service sector workers, women compared to men, children to adults, etc.). Overall, the poor and vulnerable groups are the ones that require particular short-term assistance and longer-term protection.

Social safety nets have assumed greater significance after the crisis in the transition and emerging market economies, and social funds are catching on in both emerging markets and advanced countries.

So far, the transition economies such as Cambodia and Myanmar have done very little to develop formal social protection interventions, although they face a great challenge in terms

of youth unemployment, mass poverty and child welfare issues. In conclusion, the region needs to activate a large agenda for social protection work, and future advisory and analytical work will likely reflect these regional priorities.

In the ASEAN region, the current situations of social protection are heterogeneous and determined by different levels of economic development amongst the AMCs; wide variety of social-cultural conditions and social structures; diverse qualifications and efficiency of government institutions; and various networks and power structures of lobby organisations and interest groups.

Standard concepts and interventions of social protection in ASEAN tend to focus on enhancing the capacity of poor households to accumulate assets so that they can reduce their vulnerability and enable them to withstand shocks derived from economic crisis and calamities. The impacts of the recent tsunami crisis have been very serious on the economic as well as the social conditions of large proportions of the ASEAN community.

Lessons from social protection systems in ASEAN show that the expansion of community-based child protection networks, preventing and supporting activities for vulnerable children and increasing the capacity of alternative forms of care for children at risk undoubtedly needs to be considered further by all AMCs in the years ahead. There are several strategic entry points to protect children from all forms of abuses and exploitation in public policy in ASEAN and can be applied elsewhere.

Early child development to ensure the balanced psychomotor development of the child through basic nutrition, preventive health and educational programmes, school feeding programmes, scholarships, or school fee waivers, waiving of fees for mothers and children in health services, street children initiatives, child rights advocacy/awareness programmes against child abuse, child labour, etc.

Family allowances either means-tested cash transfers or coupons/stamps for basic goods and services (i.e., food, clothing) to assist families with young children to meet part of their basic needs.

Youth programmes to avoid marginalisation and social problems among teenagers, such as juvenile delinquency, criminality, early pregnancy, prostitution, and vulnerability to drugs addiction and sexually transmitted diseases.

School feeding programmes and scholarships for children.

Waiving of fees for mothers and children in health services.

Initiatives programme for children in difficult situations to return children to shelters and homes.

Advocacy programmes against child abuses, child exploitation and child labour

With reference to child rights-based approaches (CRBA), children should be provided with opportunities to participate in policy discussions at all levels and should encourage governments to develop legislation, policy and programmes that promote the realisation of all children's rights. Compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) should be monitored. Governments also need to be pressured to develop child protection

legislation, to enforce existing legislation and to provide adequate child protection services and law enforcement and judicial systems appropriate for children.

Programmes to assist children in difficult situations should be based on a child rights-based situation assessment that identifies the children whose rights are most violated in each context and analyses the roles, responsibilities and capacities of different duty bearers and stakeholders.

Programmes should include activities to empower, strengthen and build the capacity of the different individuals and institutions that are responsible for children.

Programmes should be assessed in terms of their outcomes and impact on the lives of children, their families and communities in order to ensure that what is being done is in the children's best interests.

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