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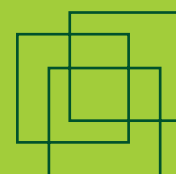


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# **PREVENTION AND ELIMINATION OF CHILD LABOUR IN AGRICULTURAL AND FISHERY AREAS AT A FLOATING VILLAGE**

**Documentation of the potential model  
in Ma Da commune, Vinh Cuu district,  
Dong Nai province**



International  
Programme On The  
Elimination Of  
Child Labour

International Labour Organization



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## IPEC

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# Acronyms & Abbreviations

AP	Action Programme
CEFACOM	Center for Family Health Research & Community Development
CPC	Commune People’s Committee
DOCST	Department of Culture, Sport and Tourism
DOET	Department of Education and Training
DOLISA	Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs
ILO	International Labour Organization
ILSSA	Institute of Labour Science and Social Affairs
IPEC	International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
MOLISA	Ministry of Labour, the Invalids and Social Affairs
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
PPC	Provincial People’s Committee
VCA	Vietnam Cooperatives Alliance
VIRI	Viet Nam Rural Industries Research and Development Institute
WU	Women’s Union

## Foreword

The project “Support the Development and Implementation of the Programme on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour” operated in Viet Nam during 2009-2013 and was funded by the Spanish Cooperation and Development Agency and implemented by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC).

One of the project’s key objectives is to develop, implement, evaluate and document effective intervention models to eliminate child labour in its worst forms in selected provinces, to draw lessons and replicate effective models. Further to these objectives, the project piloted a number of intervention models by developing and implementing Action Programmes (APs) in five cities/provinces, Dong Nai, Ha Noi, Lao Cai, Ninh Binh and Quang Nam. The APs were implemented from July 2011 to September 2013 and encompassed a wide range of activities, including awareness raising and capacity building, education and vocational training, improving working conditions and occupational safety and health as well as support of household livelihoods to prevent and eliminate child labour, especially in its worst forms. AP experiences have been recorded and summarized in the three potential intervention models as follows:

- Potential intervention model for the prevention and elimination of child labour in traditional stone carving and wood art craft villages (Hien Giang commune, Thuong Tin district, Ha Noi)
- Potential intervention model for the prevention and elimination of child labour in tourism in mountainous and ethnic minority areas (Sa Pa district, Lao Cai province)
- Potential intervention model for the prevention and elimination of child labour in agriculture and fisheries in fishing villages (Ma Da commune, Vinh Cuu district, Dong Nai province).

These potential intervention models were presented at a project workshop in Nha Trang city in August 2013 to share experiences with almost 200 representatives of government agencies at central, provincial, district and commune levels who are project partners. These models have also been appraised at AP closing workshops at each of their respective provinces. These potential intervention models have also been presented at a consultation workshop to develop the National Programme of Action on the Elimination of Child Labour in its Worst Forms, with the participation of central and provincial government agency representatives from 12 provinces.

We would like to express our special thanks for the guidance and support of the Bureau for Protection and Care of Children, the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA), the Provincial People’s Committees (PPC) where the project was implemented, the coordination of the provincial Departments of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (DOLISA) of Lao Cai, Dong Nai and Ha Noi, the active participation and cooperation of involved agencies, including the Departments of Education and Training as well as Tourism, the Viet Nam Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Viet Nam General Confederation of Labour, Viet Nam Cooperative Alliance and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including the Hoa Sua Tourism Vocational Training School and Viet Nam Rural Industries Research and Development Institute (VIRI), without whom the success of these potential intervention models would not have been possible. The active participation of these organizations in the final self-evaluation process to document these intervention models in a comprehensive and objective manner reflects the consistency of the project’s strategy and approach throughout the APs’ implementation.

Special thanks also goes to Dr. Tran Thi Minh Thi, Institute of Sociology, Viet Nam Academy of Social Sciences for her efforts, in collaboration with the ILO-IPEC project in Dong Nai province and involved agencies, to complete the documentation of these potential intervention models.





## **1. General introduction**



The project “Support the Development and Implementation of the Programme on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour” operated nationwide in Viet Nam during 2009-2013 and was funded by the Spanish Cooperation and Development Agency and implemented by ILO-IPEC.

One of the project’s basic objectives was to develop and implement an intervention model to reduce the worst forms of child labour in project provinces and use these lessons to develop and duplicate a model that offers education, vocational training, occupational safety and health (OSH) components as well as income generation opportunities for families with children in hazardous labour.

Ma Da Commune, in Dong Nai Province’s Vinh Cuu district, is one of the project sites implementing interventions to reduce child labour in agricultural and fishing work, through the support of education, vocational training and improved livelihoods for families whose children are engaged in work and or at risk of toxic, hazardous work.

## 1.1. Child labour situation in Ma Da commune

Ma Da commune was established in July 2003, when Vinh An town was divided. Ma Da is considered to be poor commune of Vinh Cuu district, which had 368 poor households in 2013, accounting for 20 per cent of the commune’s households. The 40 hectare commune has 2,064 households and 9,227 people among seven villages and 16 units. Of which, 1,798 households have regular registration status and 266 households (up to 880 people) have temporary registration status, encompassing 112 households part of a floating village. The floating village households originate from river fishermen who migrated from nearby Cambodia. These households form a special group of people in Ma Da commune because most have no official identification documents, no formal employment, no housing on land, limited education and a nomadic lifestyle, in need of special government and community support policies<sup>1</sup>



Up to 95 per cent of people are reliant on agriculture for a living, with aquaculture, fishing, mango trees and rice also popular, but frequent crop failures due to natural disasters leave many households struggling to survive.

Despite 96.8 per cent of rural households having access to electricity by the end of 2012<sup>2</sup>, in Ma Da only 50 per cent of households have electricity. This is because the commune belongs to an area for relocated migrants with a scattered population that makes it difficult to connect to the power grid. Hamlets 3 and 4, home to many overseas Vietnamese-Cambodian immigrants and floating villagers, have no electricity. This lack of electricity is a significant challenge for the cultural, living standards and economic development of Ma Da’s residents.

According to a child labour survey in four communes (Phu Ngoc and Phu Cuong communes in Dinh Quan district and Ma Da and Phu Ly communes in Vinh Cuu district<sup>3</sup>, Dong Nai province) there were 1,032 working children, with 69 percent of surveyed children having dropped out of school. Of the surveyed children, 17 percent of dropping out children are in elementary school, and 74 per cent are in secondary school. In Ma Da commune, 289 children were involved in or at risk of hazardous work, accounting for 28 per cent of child labour in four communes, accounting for 12 per cent of children in this commune. The most common types of child labour were river fishing, household farming, cultivation, nut shelling, ticket selling, bottle collecting, rubber gatherers and serving food in restaurants. These types of work have some hazardous aspects which

<sup>1</sup> Statistical report from Ma Da commune, 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Report of Electricity of Viet Nam (EVN), 2013.

<sup>3</sup> ILSSA: Beneficiary Baseline Survey of Dong Nai, 2011



could affect the health and development of children. The survey results also showed that most working children had dropped out of school due to economic difficulties, poor study performances and parents' limited awareness of the harmful effects of child labour and the positive aspects of education.

Due to commune's large area, with residential areas stretching over nearly 30km of forest land, daily transportation to school is a problem. However, preschool and elementary school have five branches for different residential areas with manageable 1-8km distances from home to school. Nevertheless, the proportions of children participating in nurseries and kindergartens is much lower than the national rate<sup>4</sup>. For secondary level, there is only a communal primary school and students in Hamlets 3 and 4 must overcome daily distances of 25km along forest road to reach school. In addition, socio-economic development obstacles have limited infrastructure investment in the relocated area which further complicate people's lives. These issues provide a social context to why children dropout of school and the risk of early and hazardous child labour is high.

## 1.2. Objectives of the action program

The AP activities in Ma Da commune in the Action Programme for the Prevention and Elimination of Child Labour in the Agricultural, Fishery and other Hazardous Areas in Vinh Cuu district, Dong Nai Province aim to contribute to the prevention and progressive elimination of child labour in project areas through the achievement of the following immediate objectives:

- Awareness raising and capacity building of local authorities, employers, mass media, mass organizations as well as the general communities on child labour and the risks of child labour
- Direct interventions with child labourers and their families to prevent and eliminate children from hazardous work
- Improvements in living standards and health in the floating village environment through reducing hazardous and dangerous factors for children and communities.

<sup>4</sup> GSO and UNFPA, 2011: *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2011*.

## 1.3. Beneficiaries

- At least 250 boys and girls under 18 years old engaged in child labour or at risk of child labour in agricultural and fishing activities in the Ma Da commune floating village and their families were direct AP beneficiaries to prevent, protect and withdraw them from hazardous work.
- Officials and staff of local government agencies, including labour staff, school teachers, mass organizations and media, community communicators and volunteers benefited from the AP through advocacy and awareness raising initiatives that made significant contributions to positive social awareness changes<sup>5</sup>



## 1.4. Strategies and principles of the Action Programme

### Strategies

The AP's intervention strategy in Ma Da commune was implemented through a combination of the prevention, protection and withdrawal of child labour from hazardous work along with helping children study in school and develop in safe and suitable working conditions reflective of their age. Children's families received economic development and income generation support to prevent children dropping out of school prematurely to work with their families.

To provide a long term and sustainable foundation to develop child labour prevention and protection, the AP implemented awareness raising activities for parents, children, communities and State agency staff together with capacity building for AP implementing and collaborating agencies.

The AP's key strategies were implemented through three groups of activities:

- (1) Activities to raise awareness and capacity: These activities were conducted to help local governments, agencies, mass organizations, local enterprises, children, families and community have a better understanding and awareness of child labour and its causes and effects. This was done through highlighting international and national laws concerning child labour to gain commitments to participate in capacity building to prevent and eliminate child labour.
- (2) Direct support and interventions to prevent, protect and withdraw child labour from hazardous work through direct support for education (formal or informal regulations), support for children's families through training courses, technical trainings on cultivation, farming and fishing safety, environmental protection knowledge to increase production quality and productivity of aquatic plants to improve household economies, which subsequently will contribute to the prevention and elimination of child labour.
- (3) Activities to improve working conditions, occupational safety and environmental protection in the floating village: These activities help improve knowledge and understanding of OSH and environmental improvements to the river along with dissemination of laws and regulations relating to OSH and child labour to allow fish cage owners to comply with laws and regulations and not use child labour.

Group activities were developed and implemented with links, synchronization and support for each other, with the leveraging and mobilization of national resources in step with support from ILO-IPEC to achieve AP goals.

<sup>5</sup> ILO-IPEC: Action Programme on Prevention and Elimination of Child Labour in Dong Nai province.



The following principles were applied throughout the process of designing, planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the AP:

- Interventions must be relevant to the socio-economic and cultural nature of project areas.
- Support services were provided by grassroots-based consultations with target groups, suitable with the conditions of project sites.
- Close collaboration and inclusive participation of related agencies and government, with proactive agreement and local government guidance in service provision to target groups.
- Integration of support service activities to target groups into existing government programmes as well as projects sharing similar objectives in project areas.
- Mobilization of resources from related stakeholders, such as NGOs, enterprises and international NGOs.

## Management and Organization

The AP was implemented with strong management, coordination and participation by the following agencies with a hierarchically structured system and defined responsibilities to ensure the AP's potential sustainability:

- The DOLISA of Dong Nai was a key AP implementing agency that managed, coordinated and supervised the AP's performance and programme budget. The DOLISA was also responsible for compiling progress reports and submitting them to the ILO-IPEC and MOLISA. To implement the AP, DOLISA established a Steering Committee, which consisted of DOLISA and Division of Child Protection leadership, the chairs of the labour units in Dinh Quan and Vinh Cuu districts and an accountant. DOLISA assigned the Division of Child Protection to be the chief focal point to directly coordinate the AP's implementation and management on behalf of DOLISA.

***“The working mechanism followed an administrative hierarchical structure, with DOLISA the AP implementing agency as assigned by the PPC. DOLISA reported to the PPC, Department of Planning and Investment, Department of Foreign Affairs every six months. The community level activities were carried in close collaboration within vertical labour sectors in the district and commune via official documents and daily communication.” (Leader, Division of Child Protection)***

- The district labour unit was the intermediate link between the DOLISA and commune/ village levels. In addition to management and supervision as assigned by the division, Vinh Cuu district labour units directly implemented several activities such as training and advocacy on the World Day against Child Labour, training for volunteers and leaders of unions and agencies in the commune.
- District and commune People's Committees are State administrative organs in the locality. Within their duties and powers, the district and Commune People's Committees (CPC) were responsible to facilitate and create opportunities for the AP's smooth local level implementation and management as well as select and recommend appropriate local agencies/ organizations to ILO-IPEC to implement different activities within the framework of interventions.
- The education and training sector not only supported children to go to school, maintain quality of education and regular attendance, but also acted as a AP focal points in advocacy and awareness raising for children, students, mobilization of children to school and involvement in monitoring and evaluation of formal/ non-formal education for children and mobilized contributions and involvement, especially budget to implement activities related to AP education outreach.

- iv. The Educational and Training sector was a focal point for educational and vocational training for children, in collaboration with awareness raising. The implementing agencies providing vocational training for Dong Nai children were licenced agencies in Bien Hoa city.
  - The VCCI and Viet Nam General Labour Union participated in awareness raising and capacity building, improvements in working conditions, enhancing safety and hygiene standards in small-scale and home-based enterprises in the commune, including child labourers and their families.
  - VCA is an employers agency that uses research to analyze and provide information related to livelihoods and training needs. It also supported economic development and income generation for families with children in the profiled list and subsequently proposed solutions for AP support.
  - Volunteers from mass organizations, such as the Youth Union and Women's Union played active roles in the development, implementation and sustainability of the AP in local areas as assigned by people's committees. For instance, CEFACOM was involved in awareness raising and capacity building using the Supporting Children's Rights through Education, the Arts and the Media (SCREAM) method.
- v. Mass media networks such as Dong Nai Television and Radio were directly involved in advocacy activities by disseminating messages related to prevention and elimination of child labour to expand the AP's footprint to other communities, leading to increased social awareness.
  2. In parallel with the survey, the AP held training courses on "Knowledge of Child Labour" and "Design, Monitoring and Evaluation of the AP on Prevention and Elimination of Child Labour" for all agency officials involved in the AP. The courses were designed to equip them with necessary child labour knowledge to effectively participate in the AP.
  3. A consultation workshop on the AP's formulation was conducted based on the survey results with the participation of all relevant agencies in the locality, including officials from people's committees, the health and labour sectors, educational and vocational training agencies, enterprises, labour union, mass organizations and media. At the workshop, participants worked together in groups to identify target groups of children and their families. They then sketched out activities to protect, prevent and withdraw children from hazardous work, how to implement these plans with collaborating agencies, expected objectives and outputs as well as discuss management and monitoring mechanisms with appropriate support services for target groups and an AP timeframe.
  4. Following the workshop, a draft AP was formulated based on the workshop results as stated in the previous step and ILO's technical assistance. A direct intervention was developed towards working children and their families in boarding villages in Ma Da commune, through applying a combination of direct prevention, withdrawal and rehabilitation intervention strategies leading to the reintegration of target children into normal developmental activities appropriate to their age.
  5. The draft AP was then presented in a local meeting with representatives from previous AP meetings to share the draft AP's contents to seek more comments and inputs from stakeholders, as well as gaining their engagement in the AP's execution.
  6. A workshop on the development of an implementation workplan was conducted with the participation of all implementing and collaborating agencies involved in implementing the AP, from provincial, district and commune levels. In the workshop, each

## Steps of the AP

The AP was developed, implemented and monitored by the following steps:

1. Conducted a Beneficiary Baseline Survey of child labour in target sites, highlighting incidences of child labour in target sites in each sector, their working conditions and times, educational status, motivations for work, family circumstances and needs for assistance. All survey staff were trained on the concept/definition of child labour, the worst forms of child labour, knowledge and skills related to the survey and child labour issues.

agency worked in a group to draw specific activities and timeframes for each respective activity, its budget and target beneficiaries to be consolidated into the entire AP workplan to achieve expected objectives and outputs.

7. Profiling of the targeted child labour, who were direct AP beneficiaries and their families, by labour staff and commune volunteers, with direction from commune agencies and communal collaborators were trained on the concept and definition of child labour, the worst forms of child labour, national and international laws, profiling procedures, interview and survey skills as well as how to use the direct Beneficiary Monitoring and Reporting System to computerize target group information into a database. The system managed and monitored activities and supported AP target beneficiaries and their families as well as other AP activities.

8. After profiling target group children, the AP organized consultations in Lao Chai and San Sa Ho communes with different groups of profiled children and their parents to discuss their needs and expectations. In detail, they focused on how to protect and withdraw them from hazardous work through support from education and/or vocational training, generation of families' income and household economy improvements, working condition improvement and OSH, as well as collaboration and commitment requirements for beneficiaries to receive support. In addition, AP implementing and collaborating agencies such as DOLISA of Dong Nai, Vinh Cuu labour unit, Ma Da commune, Vocational Training School, several private enterprises and mass organization also participated in consultation meetings at each target site, to listen to children and families' expectations and needs to identify appropriate support and outline collaboration and commitment requirements.

9. To link and refer the beneficiaries to local service providers, AP implementing agencies in the locality as defined in Step 6, meetings with DOLISA, district labour unit, people's committees, the education and training sector, vocational training, agricultural extension and mass organization representatives were undertaken. During these meetings, specific and relevant lists of profiled beneficiaries were handed to

respective service providers to discuss content and the manner of support. At the same time, the meetings discussed implementing agencies' expectations such as capacity building and research support to facilitate the effective delivery of services to target beneficiaries.

10. Documentation of intervention models and lessons learnt in Ma Da commune.





## **2. Action Programme performance**



## 2.1. Prevention and Elimination of Child Labour through awareness raising and capacity building

Raising awareness and capacity was the first step towards changing awareness, attitudes, and behavior of target groups and society. In the project area, half the population has no electricity and very limited access to informative media. Meanwhile, the scattering of the population in mountain forests means they have limited exposure to cultural entertainment. Part of the population (112 households) migrated from Cambodia and live a nomadic life, daily fishing from the river for a living, are mostly uneducated and illiterate. As a result, their awareness of subjects such as the law and international conventions on children's rights and child labour is very limited.

### **Key activities in this component included:**

- 1) Training for various government staff as well as commune and village volunteers with knowledge and skills for the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes and activities related to prevention and elimination of child labour. Training programmes were held for more than 100 staff of related agencies, including:
- A training course on the subject of "Knowledge of Child Labour", with content including advocacy and training on basic concepts of child labour, the worst forms of child labour, its causes and consequences, national legislation and regulations regarding child labour, international conventions, research topics, surveys, linkages between education and child labour, gender integration and collaboration among agencies to prevent child labour.





of Monitoring and Reporting of the Direct Beneficiaries. In these trainings, the concepts and definitions of child labour, indicators of child labour, worst forms of child labour along with provisions of national and international legislation were introduced to provide a basis for the compilation of beneficiaries' profiles.

The training content was adjusted to match local characteristics, such as specific examples of child labour. Training methods were also diversified, with group discussions, role-plays and poems.

- Training courses on the “Design, Monitoring and Evaluation of the AP for the Prevention and Elimination of Child Labour” for district and provincial staff relating to the project’s construction, management, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, why participation and collaboration of various agencies and mass organizations is essential, project procedures, the identification and analysis of problems, use of a logical framework in the project’s design, ways to structure strategies, objectives, outputs, activities and accounting methods for the development of the AP.
- Training courses on child labour prevention and elimination methods and communication skills using ILO textbooks such as “SCREAM-Support to Child Rights through Art, Education and Communication” for teachers, Youth Union, staff from elementary and secondary schools to improve communication and awareness raising skills on child rights and child labour with integrated approaches and the participation of target mass media and education groups.



- 2) Community - based communication campaigns were organized to mark the World Day against Child Labour each June annually, with rich and diversified advocacy content, encompassing laws, children’s rights, child labour and prevention and elimination of child labour. This direct and indirect communication was integrated into community cultural activities with the participation of numerous municipal departments and organizations within village/commune levels and children. These activities included:
  - For schooling and non-schooling children, Ma Da elementary and secondary school worked together to organize advocacy and awareness raising events on the prevention and elimination of child labour, including speeches, tests, drawing competitions and cultural entertainment in Ma Da commune’s Hamlet 4 with hundreds of children and adults involved. These activities were integrated with advocacy, periodical publications and documents on the prevention of injuries to children and domestic violence as well as good care for children in all seven commune hamlets.
  - Communication of project activities via loudspeakers in electrified areas.
  - DOLISA and local government delivered handouts on key points of the Law on Protection, Care and Education for Children throughout the commune.
  - Ma Da commune broadcasted messages across loudspeakers on content covering child labour, child care, victims of family violence, prevention of injuries to children, drug prevention, health care for children and reproductive health for pregnant women.

- Training courses for relevant DOLISA and district labour staff as well as commune and village volunteers on target children profiling and the use and management of the System

## 2.2. Prevention and Elimination of Child Labour through direct interventions, rehabilitation and support to their families

### 2.2.1. Support for children for schooling continuation

Ma Da commune covers an area stretching along the forest road and is divided into seven hamlets with 16 population clusters. The journey from the commune centre to Hamlets 3 and 4 covers 30km of forest road. The commune has a primary school located in the commune centre, covering primary and secondary school – with secondary schooling in the morning and primary in the afternoon. In addition, the school arranges branches to serve elementary school students. However, the school's facilities are substandard. As reported by the school's rector, the enrolment rate percentage to Grade 1 students at the correct age was 70 per cent. The remaining 30 per cent belong to children from the floating village, while the number of children who stay at home after primary school to help parents earn income was high.

After profiling potential AP beneficiaries, consultations were held with children and their families to learn about their lives, work, study and needs in consultation with the labour sector and Ma Da school management board to find appropriate and effective support to allow children to continue their learning.



#### i. Support for elementary school branches in Hamlets 3 and 4:

The AP provided equipment for students such as furniture, reference and teacher books, electric fans and an automatic water system. Books purchases for the library to be used as reference to improve teaching quality were especially valued as was AP support to allow students from poor families to obtain better quality books, school bags and clothing.

In addition to AP support, the school management board also mobilized support from local area enterprises to improve school branch facilities, including library development and restroom upgrades.



The school also utilized its annual State assigned budget to contribute to facility and equipment upgrades to create more favourable conditions for studying and lecturing, attract children to school and send teachers to families to help mobilize children to go to school.



## ii. Upgraded dormitory for secondary students (11-14 years old)

Ma Da commune only has one secondary school located in the commune centre. A key reason for students dropping out of school is the difficult daily traveling distances to school, more than 25km along a forested, dirt and desolate road, which is too dangerous and almost impossible for children aged 11-14 years old to travel. The option of parents driving children to school daily is infeasible as they do not have time nor means to do so.

ILO-IPEC, DOLISA and the commune's people's committee worked with the education sector, including Ma Da school, to find feasible and sustainable solutions to support this group of children to return to school.

To improve children's ability to attend school, DOLISA cooperated with education and training sector and the district and commune people's committees to renovate an abandoned warehouse area under the Protected Area Management Board, adjacent to Ma Da secondary school, for use as dormitories for students from remote hamlets.

In addition to the repairs, with improved toilets and kitchens, the AP provided support for a water filter plant and water pump as well as some entertainment equipment.



After repairs and upgrades, the dormitory can serve approximately 60 students and has become a vital asset for children from remote families. In fact, the number of children dropping out of school has decreased since the dormitory opened. The education sector and school manager mobilized enterprises to support the provision of more equipment such as a wardrobe, study table and cooking utensils to ensure stable living and studying

conditions for students. The education sector also provided a bus for students to return home at weekends.



Approximately 40 children used the dormitory, which is divided into male and female areas. Rent, water and electricity are free and students only pay for daily meals. Two school employees, a cook and guard, serve the dorm room.

In order to renovate and upgrade the dormitory, the AP coordinated with local authorities, commune and district People's Committee and gained support from the Dong Nai Nature Reserve to allow the school to takeover the warehouse. Besides upgrading the dormitory, the school and local authority mobilized students to utilize the dormitory room. Many poor families did not want their children to stay at the dormitory as they wanted them to support their families after school, while others were reluctant to let children stay away from home.



*"The biggest difficulty is the conflict between the desire to send children to school and small age of kids and distance from home to school. The school bus costs VND20,000, plus with lunch at school, which are out of reach of families. Some families can give their children VND10,000 for lunch. Thus, many children drop out of school. After dropping out, children help with family chores and work in farms when they are older. Children from the floating village also go fishing on the river with their parents. At the beginning of the school year, local mass organizations and villages review the number of children dropping out of school and come to families to mobilize and provide support to send children back to class." (AP volunteer of Ma Da commune)*

### iii. Opening of informal education for never-schooled floating village children aged 6-12 for birth registration support and mobilization of children back to school

At Hamlet 4 of Ma Da commune, more than 95 per cent of overseas Vietnamese (about 112 households) returned from Cambodia from 1998 without any identity documents such as marriage registration certificates and identity cards to determine the origin permanent residency to obtain a formal household registration in the commune. Consequently, children of these families have no required papers for birth certification, could not attend school due to a lack of paperwork and were not able to benefit from government support.

To address the illiteracy situation of children without birth certificates and their difficult economic situation, the AP coordinated

with the CPC and district education sector to seek agreement to open a literacy class. At the same time, the AP coordinated with the CPC and primary schools to advocate families send their children to school.



All migrant families realized the value of this opportunity for their children and sent their children to school. Upon completion of the literacy class, the district educational unit organized a screening examination, after which students of an appropriate age who met requirements would be transferred to the formal education system.

For admission, the school asked students to declare their birth information based on information provided and committed by parents. At the same time, the school and CPC successfully worked together to officially report to higher levels of government for the issuing of birth certificates to allow these students to move to higher education grades.

This successful initiative has seen 30 children from Hamlet 4 admitted to Grade 1, who are not required to pay for anything other than their insurance, clothing and studying profile.

To further assist children who have struggled to access public social services in addition to the ILO programme, the CPC and education sector mobilized support for the disadvantaged group of students from donors, organizations and businesses. The programme provided donated bicycles, clothing and support for education and library books to significantly reduce difficulties for families and create more favourable conditions for students' studies.



Besides the literacy class for children without birth certificates, the AP and commune authorities, school and mass organizations mobilized families with child school dropouts, to assist parents to work and children to return to school. Here a Vietnamese-Cambodian mother talks about this assistance:

*“My Grade 1 class at Hamlet 4 has 51 students, of whom 32 did not have birth certificates. So I have two types of pupils, formal and informal ones with two different policy regimes. The informal students are children of overseas Vietnamese returned from Cambodia. Parents are Kinh people, illiterate, live in the floating village and do not have birth certificates. Parents did not register marriages, births or permanent residency. Hence, they did not have enough forensic evidence for local household registration and children’s birth certification. In the class, the 12 oldest children are born in 2000-2003.” (Teacher LTL, Primary School Branch in Hamlet 4, Ma Da commune)*



*“I am NTL and do not remember my birth year, but I know I am 41-years-old. I am illiterate and have never gone to school. I lived in Mieng (i.e. Cambodia) from when I was born to 1994. I have four sons, the eldest is 20-years-old and self-employed. The second son is 11-years-old and quit school at Grade 3. The third child was born in 2003 and should be in Grade 5. Because my family travelled by boat everywhere it was not possible to send him to school. Now he is in Grade 1. The youngest son was born 1 May 2013. This year, ILO helped send my second son back to school and he is now in Grade 3. My husband currently travels along the river to make a living, while I stay at home raising children and sending them to school. My husband is 44-years-old, also returned from Cambodia and is illiterate. The reason we moved here was because we heard there are lots of fish here. Our current life is hard with no rice fields, land or house. My husband sends some money each month, but we have got into debt.” (NTL, a Vietnamese-Cambodian woman with a son returning to school after being mobilized)*

### 2.2.2. Economic development and sustainable livelihood promotion for children's families

Based on profiles of AP children beneficiaries, the labour sector collaborated with the commune government to hold consultations to identify the needs of children and their families.

At the same time, the AP collaborated with the VCA to conduct research and analysis of economic development and identify livelihood support needs of families, such as training on career skills to support household livelihood development and subsequently help prevent and eliminate the worst forms of child labour in Ma Da commune.



The results of the consultation with beneficiary households and the VCA report from the study carried out within the AP framework showed the majority of households lived through cultivation (cashews and mangos) for employment. More than 120 households in Hamlet 4 are landless and live on the Tri An reservoir, engaged in cage fishing or fishing on the river. All families consulted showed a desire to continue generating livelihoods naturally from the cultivation of fruit trees, cage fishing and fishing on the river. However, they also communicated a willingness to participate in technical training courses on livestock, poultry, aquaculture, household economics development and management as well as marketing skills.

A meeting between the labour sector, CPC and related agencies such as the district agriculture unit and WU was held to discuss support methods and plans based on the current livelihoods and specific needs of

families. The resulting implemented support included:



- Establishment of two livelihood groups, a chicken steering group and a hemibagrus/goby fish group. Each group elected a group leader who was responsible for contact with commune staff to periodically inform on livestock situations.
- Labour sector representatives in collaboration with the CPC, agricultural and forestry extension units and WU bought chickens or fish seed and equipment for group members. At the same time, there were training courses on techniques for cage construction, caring and vaccinations (for poultry farms) and fishing, cage construction and care (for fish farmers). Upon receipt of baby chicken/fish and training participation, households wrote commitments to not let their children drop out of school or work continuously for hours.
- Along with the training, veterinary officers and CPC officials visited each household to monitor livestock, offer timely chicken development technical assistance and monitored the situation of child labour, whether children attend school regularly, went back to school or participated in hazardous and heavy work.





- In addition to livestock skills training, the labour sector, CPC and VCA with ILO support, capacity building training was organized with expenditure management, household business planning and basic household livelihoods development skills, including sales, product introduction, negotiation and accounting management skills content with nearly 120 participants. The training courses employed respected content such as ILO's Gender and Business (Get Ahead). Positive training methods for older adults were also applied in all courses. Despite there being illiterate class members, they still understood content through simulation exercises, role-play exercises and visual aids as well as teamwork trainers working with students. This allowed participants to freely participate and be receptive to theory lessons. Training courses encouraged trainees' participation via in-kind rewards to create positiveness and emulation between trainees and groups.
- In the technical training, in addition to content related to livelihoods development, there was also a component of preventing and eliminating child labour along with work safety. At the same time, the education sector (district education unit and Ma Da school) shared regulations and policies to support poor families with children at school. To receive support, the school required children's parents to create favourable conditions for children to go to school, reduce work and not engage children in hazardous work.

In short, AP activities were integrated with local support to maximize their efficiency and effects on children. For example, the AP worked with judiciary committee to push parents to make timely child birth certificates. Education, labour and government officials integrated ILO support with financial and in-kind assistance from a range of enterprises. Coordination between agencies and beneficiaries was smooth, such as the labour sector periodically monitoring businesses up to twice a month via volunteer networks and directly supervising operations.

The following is a villager's story about life in the floating village:



- VCCI and the General Confederation of Labour of Viet Nam assessed awareness and knowledge of all owners of fishing cage, fruit garden, processing of cattle feed, cashew dissection of the commune, employees, and households awareness about child labour issues, OSH, use of protective labour equipment, working conditions and training needs. On the basis of this assessment, training courses were conducted to raise awareness about child labour and occupational health and safety for children families. As a result of this training, all employers attending training courses wrote commitments to improve working conditions and OSH in enterprises and committed not to use child labour. The guidebook on "Safety and Hygiene in Work in Agriculture and Fishery Areas" by the General Federation of Labour of Viet Nam with ILO technical support was used in the training courses for employees and families in the commune.

*"My family works as fishermen and lives in the floating village. I participated in two ILO courses to enhance my capacity - a technical fish course and one on marketing to sell products at the market. In addition, I was involved in many field trainings organized by DOLISA and district labour staff on breeding and sales skills. The classes were very useful, especially as they were held in the village so it was easy to participate.*

*I was given 1,300 young hemibagrus and have raised them from March until now, with 13 fish over 1kg now. Every day I go fishing, but net small fish for feeding and for sale. Everyday I can have 100kg of anchovies, after feeding I sell the remainder and earn about VND100,000 per day. Thanks to the technical courses, I now know how to feed and care for the fish. For example, before releasing fish into water, it is necessary to soak salt into the water for fish health and clean water to prevent fish diseases caused by polluted water. I also learnt techniques to find places to raise fish and avoid water pollution that weakens fish. If fish get ill, I now know what medicine to use.*

*My wife and I often go fishing at night. Two children, sons aged 12 and 6 selfcare at home. Living in the floating house, I taught them swimming at the age of four in case they fall into the water.*

*Other villagers from the floating houses do the same thing. My oldest son quit school because of bad school results. The teachers came home several times to ask him back to be school, but he refused. My family will continue to advise him to return to school. He is in Grade 6, but if he agrees to return to school, I will send him to the dormitory because I cannot afford school bus fees. The second child is in Grade 2, [and the school] is near the house.*

*ILO support was very important for us as it allowed us to have breeding fish as desired with technical knowledge training. Training was easy to understand and the training on sickness treatment for fish with specific tablets for each kind of disease was very useful. Before the ILO intervention, it often took 24 months to harvest fish, but now it only takes 18 months thanks to advanced technical feed, which prevented fish diseases, lessen use of expensive drugs and resulted in fast growth. These households received support to also retrain other families not receiving assistance. For example, if a nearby household has sick fish, I will come to share the same treatment from the ILO training course. My family plans to raise fish for the long-term. When fish reach 12 months, I will buy other fish to ensure continuous growth." (Le Van Hong, born in 1975, Hamlet 4, hemibagrus group).*

### 2.2.3. Improvement of OSH in the floating village

Life afloat on a raft is relatively secluded from residents on shore, but is generally more difficult due to a the dearth of power, clean water, standard toilets and bathrooms. Priority State policies for poor or disadvantaged communes, villages and households do not target households on rafts, because they have no household registration or papers verifying their origin.

Most raft houses are multifunctional, with one kitchen, bedroom and bathroom for the whole family. Pets like dogs and cats living together on the raft, with many floating households raising shrimp, fish or ducks in barn rafts. Water for daily activities such as bathing and even cooking are is surface river water. People also dispose of garbage in water near rafts, which is unsanitary and threatens the hygiene and health of families and children.

DOLISA, district labour, commune government, mass organizations and volunteers are aware that unsanitary living conditions can harm children and people's health. To address this threat, the AP used commune loudspeakers for sanitation awareness raising and capacity building activities for children's families.

Based on local people's increased awareness of the harmful effects of unsanitary living conditions, the AP worked with local people and government to clean the river and collect garbage for disposal onshore with ILO support on shore.

*"In the past, government advocated for environmental hygiene, but there was little change as there were no storage places and garbage collection points. The AP organized a completed process, including mobilization, advocacy, trash provision, and arrangement of collections every week."*  
(President of Ma Da CPC)

Children's families positively engaged in this activity because it visibly improved their living conditions and sanitation. In this work, a proactive commune government is important because it must also share responsibility for activity management, supervision and organization of regular garbage collections. This support will certainly ensure the sustainability of this activity following the AP's winding down.





### **3. Results of the Action Programme in Ma Da commune**

### 3.1. Awareness and capacity

Despite encountering several difficulties in the first stages of advocacy and capacity building, communication activities to raise awareness and strengthen capacity brought positive significant changes for groups of children, children's families, their community and agency staff.



The impact of communication was most felt by children's parents. Following advocacy and awareness raising activities, many parents sent their children to school or made commitments not to involve their children in night work on the river and at least sent children to school for half-days, helped with family chores or lightened children's work.



Communication was also very effective in changing perceptions and handling by volunteers, commune authorities and government level agencies in close contact with local people and children. They now understand the merit of the AP's work to heighten awareness and obligations in changing behavior and supporting children not to engage in early labour. With these new perceptions and awareness changes,

the commune government instructed relevant units to advocate for children and their families. For example, the WU was responsible for social mobilization of mothers, while the Veterans Association worked with fathers.

The project also helped change State employees' work skills and methods and ensured greater accountability because all interventions were based on specific operations requiring effective and visible outputs, rather than document reporting.

*"Hence we must care about being more effective. Previously, we often guided people through documents. Many aspects of the project had positive effects, which will change perception faster and ensure a higher quality of intervention." (Leader of Child Protection Division, Dong Nai)*

Changes in awareness through AP interventions translated into action in the commune, with greater protection of children in activities beyond the framework of project support. In other words, child protection, prevention and elimination of child labour have become a focal point of the local agenda. For example, in 2013:



- Development of suitable communes and hamlets for children.
- Issuance of a commune resolution and guidance to direct implementation of a village and commune model suitable for children. The commune also provided additional criteria for



suitable and friendly hamlets and communes for children in the Village Development Plan and advocated it to households.

- Organized 2013 community communication and implementation plan of activities, namely “Advocacy of moral education, and family living for Vietnamese families for 2012-2020”.
- Developed counselling meetings about drowning prevention for children.
- Statistics on prevention of domestic violence and the implementation results of the 1467/BVHTTDL - GD and 1093/BVHTTDL - GD guidelines on the prevention of domestic violence.
- Consensus reached among the the commune government to have children
- going to school at the right age and assigned the education sector to mobilize children to school.

## 3.2. Direct support and intervention

- For children beneficiaries: There are many comprehensive short and long-term solutions to attract children to school to reduce the number of children participating in the labour, with the education sector to play a positive role. Attraction of investment to upgrade dorms, arrangement of cheap school buses to take children to and from school, mobilization of dropout children back to school, organization of scholarship programmes and fundraising will all help lure children back to school. Thus, the annual dropout rate has gradually declined, from 7 per cent in 2006 to 0.58 per cent currently, which is ideal given the commune’s conditions.

The solution of opening a literacy class for children without birth certificates will have long-term sustainable benefits for the commune in meeting the high expectations of families and children. Importantly, children’s families have changed perceptions about child labour, child rights and especially the importance of education in the prevention and elimination of child labour. By addressed children’s illiteracy, it is also possible to improve parents’ literacy.

State management of floating villagers is difficult, due to a the lack of assets and their nomadic lives. The CPC, mass organizations

and the school played active roles and supported returning Vietnamese-Cambodian migrants through institutional support such as district and provincial proposals to ask for guidelines for household registration and ID cards and birth certificates for floating village children.

- For livelihoods development: The chicken group enjoyed healthy income, with great market interest, but reproductivity was low due to limited awareness and production management ability. In fact, when families received assistance, they committed to reproduce stock. However, when selling chickens most money was used to buy family assets rather than focus on turnover of capital.

*“For example, ideally by selling 100 chickens they should keep about 2 VND million to buy new chickens or keep some chickens for breeding. In fact, families sold out all stock and kept nothing for breeding. The other support programme,s such as those for selling cows and goats, experienced a similar situation.”  
 (CPC leader of Ma Da)*

The fish group has not harvested, but showed good potential die to no sick fish and good growth. This activity is likely to be sustainable because it is the professional career of the villagers.

Projects greatly contributed to the economic development of the children’s families, especially fish raising families because

*“1,500 hemibagruses can be 1.5kg each, with the average price of VND100,000 for one. Excluding risks and wastage, families can earn about VND100 million in 18 months.” (A floating village resident)*



## 4. Opportunities and Constraints





## 4.1. Opportunities

- The AP in Ma Da commune was implemented smoothly because the intervention was relevant with the socio-economic characteristics of the locality and appropriate with local people's expectations. Subsequently, there was enthusiastic participation, mobilization of resources and promotion of local ownership.
- The AP's activities fit with national children protection programmes for 2011-2015 (Decision 267/QĐ-TTg) and several activities could be integrated financially to enhance efficiency.

## 4.2. Constraints and challenges

- The AP also encountered various obstacles, primarily Ma Da's challenging socio-economic situation and difficult living conditions for its population. When awareness training and capacity commenced, the AP faced several difficulties with children's families at the floating village. After generations of a nomadic lifestyle, social awareness changes were often very difficult to accept. Many people could not read nor write, with limited awareness of issues outside their daily lives. Thus, communication and training activities could not use handouts or photos as usual. Instead, a direct explanation

communication method was used, with simple and specific words linked with their daily lives.

- Dong Nai enjoys and prospers from healthy economic development of the services industry with plentiful jobs, seasonal or long term. This favourable condition, however, can also be an obstacle when children quit school to get a job.

***"Whatever you do, you can earn VND100,000 for food purchases. No need to apply, no contract required, just a verbal agreement to work. Both the employer and employee like this logical way of making money. So there were difficulties in implementing the vocational training." (CPC leaders)***

- Mostly Vietnamese-Cambodian returning migrants, without identification documents and birth certificates for children, populated the floating village. They live a nomadic life fishing on the river, so finding a synchronous solution to socio-economic development and combating child labour was challenging.



# HỘI THẢO THAM VẤN XÂY DỰNG HỆ THỐNG GIÁM SÁT LAO ĐỘNG TRẺ CONSULTATION WORKSHOP ON FORMULATION OF CHILD LABOUR MONITORING SYSTEM

HÀ NỘI, 05/4/2013



## 5. Lessons learnt



- Officials from relevant sectors now know how to work together in planning to meet people's needs and not applying a top-down approach. For example, in building the advocacy plan, the commune government built programme planning models suitable with the conditions and people's level of awareness, which were sent to DOLISA and ILO for comment. This is a new method of working in Dong Nai, which originally followed top-down planning rather than identifying local needs for demand planning. DOLISA witnessed the effectiveness and relevance of this new method and will apply this approach in the future.
- The most direct way to address pressures for children to work is to give children and their families alternative sources of stable income. Thus, children's economic contributions become unnecessary. In this respect, capacity for further improvements to the social security system, social welfare for children and families is needed.
- To receive AP assistance, families must participate in training, advocacy capacity and make a signed commitment to send children to school for at least half of the day. However, with the cost of living the 2 VND million investment granted for a household cannot bring big changes. The AP's most significant contribution was technical assistance accompanying awareness and capacity building training which has changed the way of thinking and economic development of children's families as well as of the way children engage in work.
- Awareness raising and capacity building were often the first areas to significant change during the AP. While the economic situation of families is significant, the awareness of parents is more important. For example, wealthy families allow children to dropout of school, while many children from poor families still go to school.
- The AP has brought a new bottom-up approach to meet people's needs rather than the top-down method. Some previous programmes provided support, yet failed to provide counseling and needs assessment activities. For example, a number of projects supported cattle, chicken and fish livelihood assistance, but residents did not find the programmes inappropriate. Also, rural vocational programmes often sent announcements to children for registration, rather than consultation and counseling children on decent work. The AP was a major improvement as it directly met children, provided specific guidance on careers, school fees, transportation methods and how to find a decent job after course completion. The AP also contributed to changing local government awareness and roles in mobilizing resources for interventions.
- Local government ownership and leadership in all intervention procedures was a big achievement, ranging from participatory consultation meetings, intervention development, implementation, maintenance, monitoring and possible replication. The AP mobilized inclusive participation from a range of stakeholders, including ministries, local government, mass organizations, labour agencies, mass media, the community, children and children's families with direct and indirect short to long-term interventions. Meanwhile, coordination and collaboration from province to commune and between relevant agencies and mass organizations was also a success.
- The AP acted to reduce poverty, develop family livelihoods, support children in formal education and vocational training, health care and gradually move children out of hazardous work while ensuring OSH working conditions. Of these solutions, education and vocational training promotion were key strategies for combating child labour, while the livelihoods promotion strategy for children's family was crucial for the long-term elimination of child labour.
- The intervention of informal educational support for children from the floating village in terms of facilities, literacy classes and advocacy communication was very important and effective. The technical assistance for economic development of livestock groups and household expenditure management also created excitement and interest from people.
- Awareness from parents to send children to school remained limited, because childcare was not sufficient. "Providing local government to villagers on the raft was complicated. Patience is needed to raise family awareness combined with advocacy and livelihood support. Children's families now have trust in AP staff, so they will follow AP activities." (CPC leader of Ma Da)



## **6. Potential Sustainability of the Action Programme**





The Dong Nai model displayed indicators of sustainability in several different aspects. In particular:

- 1) Stable social and political environment, with intervention activities developed through consultations and agreement of local staff, children and children's families, which are key inputs for AP development to be relevant to local situations.
- 2) The institutional capacity of the implementing stakeholders was enhanced. The AP's success depended local authorities' support and political commitment. The AP's design was not only towards the capacity building of children and the community, but also institutions.
- 3) Linkages to socio-economic plans in local areas were made. The province proactively linked the AP with existing vocational training and job placement programmes.
- 4) Inclusive participation of the community, especially effective collaboration among local governments, was achieved. The commune government is the most important agency as it is the implementing agency closest to the community.
- 5) The process of implementing the AP will serve as a basis for the implementing agency to request follow-up materials and financial assistance from authorities to expand the proposed activities. The AP will also provide lessons and experiences that can serve as inputs to policy formulation on recommended interventions to withdraw children from the worst forms of child labour.
- 6) The AP's ongoing success depends on the willingness and political commitment of the local government. Its design is premised on strengthening the local capacity to combat child labour, which requires an alliance of key stakeholders and the mobilization of society to guarantee that action is sustained over time and its results will continue independently of external assistance and support.
- 7) To ensure sustainability, AP technical support should be transferred to use State funding. Training of trainers for the AP ensured the sustainability of human resources because this group will continue applying knowledge and skills in other support programmes. DOLISA is applying and expanding ILO training patterns, methods, techniques and communication skills. For example, the Provincial Division of Child Protection will not use previous, out-dated training methods in future activities.

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