

”Rights of Underprivileged Migrant Children in Ho Chi Minh City”

Third Year Review, November/December 2016

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INTRODUCTION

This report is based on the findings from the project review carried out by Casper S. Johansen (CSJ) and Jonas WS Andersen (JWSA) from 28 November to 4 December 2016.

According to the Term of Reference the review was to :

- Provide a status on project activities
- Based on the status consider whether an extension of the project was recommendable within the framework of the existing budget and if so, for how long and for what activities
- Visit shelters and explore relevant courses for shelter staff and other relevant interventions of importance to the future work of the shelters
- By consulting and by observation of the social workers' activities make suggestions for changed working methods and new activities – also under consideration of the survey results
- Discuss the procedure of the making of a new project proposal based on the survey results

Based on the Terms of Reference the program of the review was as follows from the schedule below. Most of the activities in the schedule was attended by both CSJ and JWSA, but in some cases CSJ and JWSA attended separate activities. In such cases the it is noted who took part in what activity.

	Monday 28 Nov	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sat	Sunday 4 Dec
Morning		Talk on "Being your child's friend"	Casper: Family Visit	Status on Training of Children Status on Staff training	Core Group Meeting		Contest on Children's Rights
			Jonas: Status on accounts Fundraising				
	<i>Lunch</i>	<i>Lunch</i>	<i>Lunch</i>	<i>Lunch</i>	<i>Lunch</i>		
Afternoon	13 PM Review Agenda Survey Findings	Casper: Meeting DK students from LRWS	Visit Green Bamboo	Discussion with social workers on working methods	Findings: Contents and suggested procedure for project extension		Meeting with LRWS management
		Jonas: Advocacy Activities					

ACTIVITY STATUS

The status on project activities were discussed in meetings with the entire HCWA project staff and JWSA. During most discussions CSJ was also present.

In general, the project activities are progressing as planned with the exception of vocational training activities and the fundraising component. On the activity of providing health insurances the project has overperformed.

In the table below project indicators are compared with what had been achieved at the time of the review.

Activity	Indicator		Achieved	
	Sessions	Persons	Sessions	Persons
CSAP training of adults	12	-	22	-
CSAP training of Children	70	1400	44	1100
HIV	25	500	20	488
Life Skills training	8	-	10	-
Legal Papers	-	100	-	110
Support Classes	-	-	221	-
Scholarships	-	500	-	424
Vocational Training	-	140	-	91
Health Insurance	-	500	-	951
Family Visits	25	500	-19	424

Advocacy Activities

Advocating for children's rights is one of the objectives of the project. The advocacy interventions are addressing local authorities (through networking and training activities) as well as the children and their families (through training activities and awareness raising events).

As shown in the table above more training sessions than targetted on CSAP (Child Sexual Abuse Prevention) for adults have been carried out. CSAP training sessions for children are fewer than expected, but more children than planned have participated in the sessions, so despite a low number of sessions, the targetted number of children are still within reach with 300 more to go before the project terminates.

During the review CSJ and JWSA both observed a training session targetted for parents of teenagers and participated in an awareness raising event on childrens' rights with approximately 200 actively participating children. Also representatives of local authorities (for instance DOLISA) participated.

The HCWA project staff reported that they receive very positive feedback from the authorities on their training activities. The HCWA has conducted CSAP training for the local police, and the police is now asking for more theory on CSAP and invites HCWA back for more training.

Also the training sessions for parents have turned out successful. During the training sessions the parents share openly their experience. The sessions have turned out to be an empowering experience to them and they too ask for more training. This explains why the HCWA has conducted more training sessions for adults than planned.

HCWA informs that in five specific cases they have not been able to provide migrant children with legal papers. Through their networking activies the HCWA discusses these cases with other NGOs and local authority. They send letters to higher authorities and calls them, but due to bureaucratic regulations, in these five cases, they have been unable to find a solution. A new law was passed recently, entitling "every child to be heard". However, if the law is to have any impact on such cases, better cooperation between varies authorities is needed.

HCWA mentions social media as a new means of advocacy to be explored.

Vocational Training

As shown in the table above, the targetted number of 140 persons in vocational training is far from being met with only 91 persons in vocational training at the time of the review. According to HCWA the tendency in Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) is that the number of providers of vocational training is growing, but less children are interested.

According to HCWA, the parents encourage their children to find work rather than go to vocational training. The families need the money. Instead of vocational training the children can also chose to receive "training on the job", but only for very simple and low paid work which does not offer better opportunities for the future.

The social workers of HCWA advise families to encourage their children to opt for vocational training, but it is hard to convince them, when they need the income from the children.

Another issue is the distance between the homes of the children and the training centres, as many of the targetted children live far from the city centre and have to spend hours on transportation every day to go to the training centres. HCWA is experimenting with bringing the training closer to the childrens' homes and this seems to have a positive impact.

Fundraising

According to the project document a fundraising mechanism able to cover the core costs of the HCWA should be established before the termination of the project. However, the building of a fundraising mechanism was still at a very early stage by the time of the review.

At the time of the review a fundraising coordination team with representatives from the HCWA head office as well as from the shelters had been established. The team is headed by Mr. Phuc, and special tasks (such as website development, communication etc.) have been appointed to specific members of the fundraising team. They are being coached by Leann (the fundraising consultant from Kingston Smith) via Skype. HCWA explains they are developping a financial plan as well as SMART Objectives, but it takes longer than expected, not least the translation into English. They have two expat volunteers who are helping them write applications in English and researching on potential donors. Leann is helping them to write an appeal letter. The present plan is to send out applications for support by November 2017.

HCWA also attended a seminar with other NGOs on fundraising.

The project staff expresses scepticism on the possibility of raising funds although Leann seems more optimistic. However, I (JWSA) detect a slightly changed mindset since my last review in 2015 – a mindset that has gone from despair and apathy to scepticism. It seems that the HCWA staff have obtained some tools and a plan on how to work on fundraising, but that they have yet to gain trust in their own ability to carry out the task.

EXTENTION OF PROJECT

Based on the present status on the project activities HCWA and JWSA agree that an extention of the project period is recommendable.

Despite the fact that the initiation of the project was delayed 6 months due to lacking permission from the authorities the HCWA has been able to reach most targets on time. However, the fundraising component was further delayed as the fundraiser resigned and HCWA was unable to find a new qualified fundraiser. As explained above a fundraising coordination team has now been established and is being coached by a consultant. However, the implementation of the new fundraising plan is not realistically achievable within the remain project period.

In my (JWSA) assessment, the success of the new fundrasing plan depends on strong support from the Danish project group as well as from Kingston Smith. Without this support and without a 6 months extention period to consolidate the fundraising component, the sustainability of the project and of HCWA will be threatened.

Furthermore, an extention of the project would enable HCWA to experiment further with their new strategy of bringing vocational training closer to the homes of the target group. In this way, HCWA would – in a best case scenario – be able to reach the targetted 140 persons in vocational training before the extention period ends, thereby providing HCWA with valuable new insights usable for future social interventions. Insights which could also prove valuable to other NGOs working in HCMC.

Finally, HCWA mentioned that a wave of new migrants from the borderland between Vietnam and Cambodia was reaching HCMC at the time of the review. HCWA would support these new migrants by continuing their strategical service deliveries (reproductive health, legal papers, scholarhips, vocational training etc.) to these migrant children to the extent that the budget would allow it.

SHELTER STAFF

Both CSJ and JWSA visited the shelters, Green Bamboo (boys) and Little Rose (girls) during the review.

Both shelters are in need of the repair, mostly so Green Bamboo: The bathroom is in a worn out condition posing a threat to the general hygiene. There is no hot water as the heater on the roof top is broke. There are water damages in several rooms on several floors. HCWA asked for permission to spend the money for the physical upgrading of the shelters on renovation work of Green Bamboo.

Ms. Phat, the manager, is knowledgeable and very personally engaged. Her methods are based on professional networking and corporation with the local public schools, local football clubs, outreach workers from three different districts, the police, and shelters in the city. However, we (CSJ and JWSA) are both concerned that she may be overburdened as the shelter is severely understaffed due to lack of funds. From talking to Ms. Phat, we were under the impression that the boys were left unattended at night, but HCWA assured us that this was not the case.

In general, LRWS is in a far better physical condition, but also here the bathroom/toilets are in a bad shape. It is our impression that the Shelters would benefit from professional networking in the local community in order to secure more local resources.

Both shelters benefit from voluntary staff/interns from abroad.

SOCIAL WORKERS

During the review CSJ went with a HCWA social worker on a family visit and both CSJ and JWSA observed a life skills training for migrant children between 7-16 years, a training session for parents of teenagers on how to give emotional guidance and support to their children when going through puberty. Furthermore, CSJ had an afternoon discussion meeting with social workers and shelter staff on outreach work.

CSJ assessment is that the HCWA social workers are strongly professionally founded. They connect well with children as well as with the parents. CSJ main focus during the review was on outreach activities. He found an unrealized potential in three areas:

- 1) Training staff in professional networking in the local community (local teachers, shopkeepers etc.) would add value to the work already carried out by the HCWA staff. It would increase awareness about local resources and also raise awareness among locals about the work carried out by the HCWA, thereby creating the foundation for future local fundraising and support.

- 2) There is no follow up on the children who used to receive support from HCWA. Follow-ups such as contacting former beneficiaries one year after they stopped receiving support from HCWA, would provide HCWA with valuable insights on how the interventions of HCWA is perceived of by the target group. This could prove useful for future strategic planning, development of new activities or readjustment of existing interventions.
- 3) When working with parents, it is primarily the mothers that participate. This is partly due to the fact that the fathers are often at work at the time of training, and partly due to traditional gender behaviour. Most men consider parenting issues a woman's area of responsibility. However, by getting men to participate in dialogues about for instance domestic violence against women and children, would most likely have greater impact. However, to get their attention would demand additional methods of gender based approach.

NEW PROJECT

The findings from the surveys conducted as part of the project suggest that the disadvantaged children in HCMC are primarily concerned with their health and with getting a good job and preferably an education.

In this perspective and based on the findings during the review we (CSJ and JWSA) suggest that a new project proposal include some or all of the following activities:

- Focus on a new model for vocational training. For instance by bringing the training closer to the homes of the children
- Professional networking in the local community in order to insure local awareness and involvement/engagement in fundraising. This also includes "preventive outreach" and strategic use of social media in advocacy activities
- Health issues to be included in life skills training (food and medication safety)
- A gender based approach for advocacy activities

It was agreed that Lise Malling Olsen should visit HCWA in February in order to conduct practical training of HCWA staff in project proposal for a new project based on the findings of the surveys.

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

To sum up, despite the fact that the project initiation was delayed by six month due to lacking permission from the public authorities, most of the targetted results described in the project document are within reach before the termination of the project period.

Furthermore, it is evident from the feedback from parents and authorities (the secondary target group) that the project is having a positive impact on their awareness and interest in children's rights.

While the HCWA staff's capacity on conducting social research has been improved and their legitimacy as advocates of children's rights has been strengthened by their strategical deliveries, the sustainability of HCWA and the project activities ara fundamentally threatended by the fact that the fundraising component is severely delayed and that HCWA's capacity on fundraising has yet to be consolidated. Therefore, we recommend a project extention of six month in order to further strengthen HCWA capacity in this field. At the same time, this will give HCWA an opportunity to test the impact of their approach on vocational training and possibly to reach the target of this activity as well.

Finally, it is recommended that HCWA is permitted to spend the budget allocated for the physical upgrading of the shelters on Green Bamboo Warm Shelter.