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ANNEXES

Code of Conduct for Adults in the Mekong Children's Forum



Code of Conduct for Adults

The Voices of Children initiative recognizes that children's unique experiences and perspectives add a new dimension to the human trafficking debate.

The Mekong Children's Forum is a chance for children to speak out – and for adults to listen to them. Let's hear what children have to say, in their own words. Adults are here to:

- Support the children with our time and resources
- Answer children's questions
- Make sure the children are safe and comfortable

As an adult coming to the Mekong Children's Forum, you should:

- Put the best interests of each child above any other consideration.
- Treat all children with respect all the time.
- Respect the rights of children to think freely and express themselves freely.
- Try to answer children's questions – honestly and completely.
- Use simple language and clear explanations that children can understand.
- Respect the right to privacy and confidentiality of all children.

You should **NEVER**:

- ⊗ Use physical violence, or the threat of physical violence, against a child.
- ⊗ Use language or behaviour that could be offensive, humiliating, upsetting or threatening to a child.
- ⊗ Pressure a child to give personal information about themselves, or do or say anything else against their will.
- ⊗ Do things for children of a personal nature that they can do for themselves.

Every child at the Mekong Children's Forum is under the care of a chaperone. Always inform the child's chaperone before you spend time separately with a child.

Let's join hands to protect children from danger, abuse and exploitation – if you have any doubts or suspicions that a child or children may be at risk, please share it with the organizers.

Children's Agendas for Action from national, provincial and other forums



Cambodia Children's Declaration **"National Children Forum on Promotion of Action Against Child Trafficking"** **9–10 September 2004** **Phnom Penh, Cambodia**

Child Trafficking is a major, increasingly serious, concern. It demands urgent and firm measures to address it, since it strongly affects the physical, intellectual, spiritual, and emotional development of children. We have learnt that child trafficking occurs in different forms such as hazardous work, sex work, domestic work, and pornography. This fact urged us – who are the victims of trafficking, children at risk of trafficking, and young child right activists who have experience in anti-trafficking, from different provinces and municipalities, 52 persons in total – to participate in this National Children Forum on Promotion of Action Against Child Trafficking on 09–10 September 2004, in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, in order to share our own experiences and views on child trafficking as well as recommendations to contribute to policy planning and programs leading to effective and sustainable solutions.

To eliminate the above problems, we, representatives of Cambodian children, would like to recommend and appeal as follows:

Royal Government

- Eliminate corruption, create additional laws for child protection and strengthen law enforcement.
- Raise awareness about laws relating to child trafficking widely and continuously.
- Strengthen the quality of education and integrate children's rights into the national educational curriculum.
- Build the capacity of officials of relevant ministries.
- Eliminate all exploitative occupations of children.
- Provide financial and material support to create job opportunities and build people's skills.
- Eliminate poverty and domestic violence.
- Increase children's access to health centres and health services – free of charge.
- Provide children opportunities to participate in activities benefiting their lives and welfare at every level.
- Cooperate with other organizations to establish child protection networks and counseling networks for children.
- Control marriages, especially marriages to foreigners.

Civil Society

- Promote wide dissemination (awareness-raising) about children's rights and child-related issues.
- Provide material and financial support to child victims and poor children, and find appropriate markets for them.
- Form savings groups everywhere, especially in rural areas.
- Cooperate with the Royal Government to eliminate pornography.
- Cooperate with the Royal Government to strengthen illiteracy programs for children and people in rural areas.

Children

- Be aware of their own rights and responsibilities.
- Continue to disseminate and share good experiences and give advice to other children.
- Closely cooperate with the authorities to receive and provide information.
- Be brave to share the views and experiences of being victims.
- Study hard.

Child Trafficking is a violation of children's rights, as it contrasts with Article 35 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states that States Parties should "prevent the abduction of, the sale of or traffic in children ..."

We strongly hope that the Royal Government and Civil Society will take our recommendations into consideration and turn them into real actions to eliminate child trafficking in Cambodia and in the region effectively and in a sustainable way.

'Children are essential resources in the success of sustainable national development.'

'Child trafficking destroys human resources and pillars of a nation.'

Proposal
By Delegates to the "China Children's Forum on Trafficking Prevention"
30 August 2004
Nanning, Guangxi, China
Listen to our voice!

- Live life nicely; treat children nicely!
- No infringing on children's rights!
- Be strong, be confident, and be happy!
- Prevent trafficking and let children take part – let's celebrate "Anti-trafficking Day" together!
- News media, children call for your care and concern!
- Family guardianship, school education, self-protection – all are necessary and important.
- Let parents and children be friends!
- With confidence and persistence, there's nothing we can't do to get rid of trafficking!
- Let every child play his or her part in fighting trafficking!
- Attention, you traffickers! You shall be punished!
- Traffickers, how will you look into our helpless eyes and mend our wounded hearts?
- Can't the world be any nicer? Give us back our innocent smiles!

To make our dream come true, we propose that:

I. An "International Anti-trafficking Day" should be designated so that we may stand on the same stage to voice our ideas every year.

Because that will:

- Strengthen the impacts of anti-trafficking efforts,
- Speed up trafficking prevention progress,
- Let people know more about trafficking prevention on that day,
- Help with advocacy and punishment, and
- Get the attention of the whole society.

Suggestions:

- Strengthen advocacy in order to let more people take part in trafficking prevention; make public service advertisements to raise people's awareness; help children better protect themselves; and reduce the chances for trafficking in children and women.
- Punish traffickers and beat down their defiance.
- Award those who have done much in trafficking prevention during the past year.
- Hold a children's forum on "Anti-trafficking Day".

II. Governments of all countries should work together closely to fight cross-border trafficking and centralize management and let each relevant department do its anti-trafficking job.

Because:

- Cross-border trafficking is serious.
- Without centralized management relevant departments cannot unite their efforts and traffickers will be more uncontrolled.
- International cooperation will unite all powers and fight cross-border trafficking more effectively.
- That will build a strong anti-trafficking alliance.

Suggestions:

- Strengthen cooperation, sign anti-trafficking agreements, and set up international anti-trafficking organizations.
- Strengthen border inspection and forbid illegal immigration.
- Carry out more international experience and information exchange.
- Print multi-lingual trafficking prevention materials.

III. The news media should respect the privacy of trafficked people, abide by professional ethics, and disclose criminal offenses while protecting the rights of trafficked people. Because:

If it doesn't respect trafficked people, it will hurt them for a second time and that is not good for children's development, and That will lead to discrimination.

Suggestions:

- Ask for the approval of people involved and don't use their real names.
- Tell people more about how traffickers are punished and less about how people are trafficked.

IV. The government should care more about children in rural and remote areas and advocate trafficking prevention. Because:

- The economy is poor in rural and remote areas where trafficking often takes place.
- Good advocacy needs the government's support.
- Some villagers need to know more about the law.
- Every group is equally important.
- People in rural and remote areas should know more about how to do good and how to live a safe life.
- Farmers should know the law and use it to protect themselves.

Suggestions:

- More investment and advocacy.
- People from urban/developed areas and rural/developing areas visit each other and exchange ideas.
- Carry out advocacy in ways that work in rural areas.
- Set up legal assistance stations.
- Give people more life skills training.

V. Parents should listen to their children and communicate more with them. They shouldn't look into their children's privacy or stand between them and their friends of the opposite sex, but give them more private space. Because:

- Privacy is a right of the child, and parents should respect it.
- Parents are their children's guardians: they should not only take care of their children but also pay attention to their mental well-being.
- Little communication keeps parents and children apart and lets children act against parents' will.
- If children act against their parents' will too often, they may leave home and those who know little about self-protection are likely to be trafficked.

Suggestions:

- Teach the law to parents and raise their awareness about trafficking prevention.
- Set up parents' committees in communities and advocate trafficking prevention among migrant parents, in the right place and at the right time.
- Parents should listen to their children and communicate more with them.

VI. The government should set up "children's letterboxes" and "children's reception centres" to let children voice their ideas.

Because:

- With no chance to voice their ideas, some children may head in the wrong direction.
- If decision-making does not include children's ideas, it will be hard to fully protect children's rights.
- This may enable people to share children's difficulties and problems and to help poor children.
- Each citizen has the right to say what he/she thinks, to take part in public affairs, and to protect his/her privacy. And children must have the same rights.

Suggestions:

- Psychiatrists and legal consultants should be always available at reception centres to handle issues in a timely manner.
- Protect the privacy of the children's letterbox and don't disclose its contents without a good reason.
- The letterboxes can be placed in schools, communities, and township government office buildings, so that problems can be solved in time.
- Make the "children's reception centre" a place for children to exchange their ideas and to learn from one another.

**Statement
from the Children-Youth Forum Against Human Trafficking
21–24 September 2004
Vientiane, Lao PDR**

Laos is still a developing country. The education level of most of the Lao people is still low. And while the cost of the living is increasing, the income in Laos is still low (especially) in comparison to neighboring countries, which are more developed. The human trafficking problem has been growing in the countries that are located near the Mekong River. Laos has also been affected by this growth in human trafficking and it has been a big and serious problem in the country, especially in the districts where they have borders with other developed countries.

We want to see every child being protected from human trafficking and want the human trafficking problem to end in our country. We recommend that:

1. On Labour migration

The government should have stricter laws on labour migration and give strong punishment to illegal agents.

2. Give opportunities to returnees

Society should welcome the victims who come back home, give care and guidance to them.

- Let the returnees have an equal rights to live their life like others, and train them with life skills or give them opportunity to continue their studies if they are children.
- The government should cancel the law that fines victims.
- Let victims be part of the people, to distribute information and news, and tell the experiences that they had to others.

3. The way of using the laws

- The government should collect data and then see which laws haven't been effective, and create new laws to fill the gaps.

4. The way of treating illegal agents

- The government should strongly punish and destroy the illegal agents and all their colleagues.
- There should be strict laws to punish the illegal agents.

5. Give opportunities to children

- Give opportunities to poor children and build more schools and make education more accessible.
- The adults should take care of children.
- Since the funding for children's education is not enough, the government should give more funds for the children to have good education.

6. Build children's playgrounds

- The government and INGOs should build more places for children to play, and have trainers for the children on various topics: art, sport, games, etc.

7. Children's participation

- The children should receive information on human trafficking.
- The children should be part of doing anti-human trafficking activities.
- We would like to have more skills, more freedom in thinking and expressing ideas.

8. Cooperation

The government should raise more money to solve the human trafficking problem and cooperate with international organizations and other countries that have the same problem.

Anti-human trafficking is a long-term, not a short-term, work. The government and the private sector should help each other in promoting knowledge, training and working against human trafficking.

We would like to thank the government and the INGOs that have supported us to be part of anti-human trafficking activities.

Agenda for Action as Adopted by the Thai Children's Forum on Human Trafficking

30 August 2004

Chiang Mai, Thailand

Following The Thai Children's Forum: Human Trafficking – The Voices of Children

We, the 50 children, are representatives here from Phayao, Chiang Rai and Chiang Mai. We are part of the children who participated in the campaign to end human trafficking. Some of us are affected by human trafficking; others are children at risk of falling victims to trafficking. We met in Chiang Mai during 27-30 August 2004, to discuss the rights of children and the need to end human trafficking. We propose the following points for considerations by adults.

Nationality:

1. We urge the government to give Thai nationality to children born in Thailand, even though our parents are not all Thai.

Education:

2. We want the government to give scholarships to all poor children even if they don't have Thai nationality.
3. We want to see the improvement of libraries in each community, with publications and media suitable to the communities, including materials on human trafficking.

Child Rights:

4. The government should have measures to control the media where it affects children.
5. We want the government to have a policy to establish children's councils in schools, communities and at national level (participation at all levels).
6. There should be media about children and produced by children themselves.
7. We want the National Children's Rights Day to be a public holiday so that children have opportunities to organize activities and express opinions on children's rights.

Prevention:

8. We want to see an end to human trafficking.
9. There should be information on human trafficking, legislation and rights available in all communities.

Promotion of Children's Quality of Life (Well Being):

10. The government should promote the quality of life of children at risk.
11. We propose trainings for adults to better understand children.
12. We want society to recognize and provide opportunities to victims of trafficking.
13. The government should cooperate with and provide more support to NGOs.
14. Arrange appropriate jobs for children above 13 years old, for those with or without Thai nationality and those with or without educational opportunities.
15. We want adults to recognise the rights to education and participation, as well as acceptance and protection for street children.

Viet Nam Children's Agenda for Action
As adopted by the delegates to the National Children's Forum:
"Children speak out on prevention of child trafficking and labour"
25 August 2004
Ha Noi, Viet Nam

1. Let us speak out. Listen to and respect our voices.
2. Children deserve the best.
3. We all need to go to school, be protected and treated equally, whether girls or boys, and regardless of the location where we live, whether it is urban or rural areas.
4. Everyone must speak up to stop the trafficking of children and women.
5. We, the children, must be aware of false sweet-talk, and better protect ourselves so as not to fall into the trap of child traffickers.
6. Working children face the risk of being trafficked, so they need better protection.
7. A happy family is the best barrier to protect children from child trafficking and child labour.
8. We wish to have more information and advocacy campaigns on child trafficking and child labour.
9. Child traffickers and deceivers must face stricter punishment and we need more effective law enforcement.
10. We need better help for the victims of child trafficking to be reintegrated into their families and communities.
11. We are loving children and are willing to give our hands in friendship to those others who are victims of trafficking.
12. We wish an end to children working on the street, children doing domestic work, and children doing hard work or unsuitable jobs to earn their living.
13. We do not want to work in hard and hazardous environments. Hiring us to do hazardous jobs must be banned.
14. The government and local authorities should give a hand to help families out of poverty.
15. Mummy and daddy, we love you and we need your love and care.

Letter from Myanmar Children

Dear Friends who are working with Save the Children and who attend the Mekong Children's Forum,

The Union of Myanmar is not a wealthy country but is rich in natural resources. Buddhism flourishes and people believe in Buddhism. But due to economic hardship and poor preventive and protective measures, children are facing the problem of being trafficked. Children who are sold face a lot of bad consequences. For instance, these children are being abused to an extent that is not appropriate to their ages.

Children's representatives from Kayin, Mon and Shan States attended and participated in the discussions in the National Children's Forum: Human Trafficking: Voices of Myanmar Children, held in Myanmar, and gave suggestions relating to the prevention of human trafficking; especially combating trafficking in children.

As we are not able to attend the Mekong Children's Forum, we hope that children from the other five Mekong Region Countries will present our suggestions to the six countries' governments. It is also hoped that the six governments will take necessary action to prevent and eliminate child trafficking.

Suggestion

Parents, communities and the government should adopt effective legislative and preventive measures to combat human trafficking, and translate these practices into reality.

Awareness Raising

- Raise awareness among community members, teachers, parents, etc. on trafficking issues, the root causes and the worst effects on children.
- Provide enough qualified teachers in schools for the development of children.

Support

- Provide free access to education, create job opportunities and give financial assistance to children from poor families by the government.
- Provide necessary support by the government to those who suffer as a result of natural disasters.
- Ensure improvement of the economic situation of the country by practising an "open market" policy.
- The government should do economic and social development for the well-being and welfare of the children.
- Facilitate reduction of prices of commodities.
- Eliminate inflation in the local currencies so that it is possible to take measures to increase the value of local currencies.
- Respond with a wide range of approaches to become a developed country in order to have equal opportunities like people in neighbouring countries.

Action against Brokers/Traffickers/Other persons involved in trafficking

- Ensure that parents prevent their children from migrating to neighboring countries and working there.
- Be sure to inform community leaders immediately when strangers enter into their community, and villagers and community leaders undertake necessary investigations.
- Do not allow those who are assigned duties in checkpoints along the border to drink or use drugs. If they do so, they can easily make wrong actions and are liable to become involved in the trafficking process.
- Take serious action on allegations of bribery and corruption.
- Arrange necessary interventions to provide people with opportunities to work legally in neighbouring countries, and to enjoy the same status as other employees there.

Working in other Countries

- Provide opportunities equal to those enjoyed by legal workers, in neighbouring countries.
- Cooperate with governments from other countries in order to protect our working children from being exploited and to allow them to enjoy the same rights as native employees.

Rescue and Repatriation

- Government, repatriate trafficked children from shelters/detention centres, in close collaboration with international organizations.
- Communicate and coordinate with other organizations which are working for the best interests of children.

- Government, take appropriate measures for vulnerable children who are detained in other countries to ensure their safe return back to their families.
- Government, make necessary arrangements for safe return.

Support to Returnees

- Encourage returnees, and provide necessary assistance to returnees, don't neglect or ignore them.
- Do not seize returnees' wages and property at checkpoints when they come back of their own will.
- Be sure to welcome returnees warmly without discrimination on any grounds; develop positive attitudes towards them.
- Be sure to help in solving their problems and provide necessary support through understanding of their feelings.
- Organize non-formal education programmes and vocational training programmes for the resettlement of returnees.
- Treat HIV/AIDS-infected returnees kindly and warmly.

It is hoped that discussions and suggestions made by children on child trafficking will be presented in the information media, and governments concerned will take necessary action after taking into consideration the children's voices. Action should be taken to eliminate child trafficking through cooperation with international organizations and agencies. The international community should designate a day for eliminating trafficking.

If we do not think too highly about other countries, we will be free from trafficking. The government, families and communities should work hand in hand to combat and prevent trafficking. And necessary actions should be taken to guarantee the rights of children who are vulnerable and marginalized.

Best wishes for all children in the Mekong Region

Children from Myanmar

who attended National Children's Forum:

Human trafficking: Voices of Myanmar Children, held on 4-6 October 2004, organized by Save the Children UK

The Mekong Children's Recommendations on Human Trafficking



Mekong Children's Recommendations on Human Trafficking

Introduction

Children are the future of every country, and the ones who can ensure a country's sustainable development. However, trafficking of children severely violates their rights.

In the Greater Mekong Sub-region, there is a serious problem of human trafficking, which can be seen both within countries and across borders. Moreover, the phenomenon of trafficking is on the rise. Many children have no certainty in their daily lives, or are even at great risk of being trafficked. Victims of trafficking suffer tortures. For instance, they are likely to be exploited, forced to do hard work, enter the sex industry etc. These factors will have very bad impact on the development of the children's physical and psychological health, as well as on their intelligence and emotions.

In our view, there are several main causes of child trafficking, such as: poverty; lack of employment opportunities; low level of education; children's limited awareness of self-protection; sometimes, parents cannot protect their children very well; in addition, there is not enough cooperation among countries. There are many other reasons that add to the problem.

We strongly hope every child can be properly protected and be kept away from trafficking. We hope all the children can enjoy their naïve smiles, and there is a happy and colourful world for them to live in.

Why we are sending this message

We have come here to let all the governments of the countries of the Greater Mekong Sub-region hear our voices and know our real needs in relation to trafficking in children.

We ask for full support from the governments of the countries of the Greater Mekong Sub-region on implementation of various activities to combat trafficking.

Our Recommendations

Social and economic development

- Governments should have policies and measures to promote social and economic development, such as controlling prices and inflation, credit for the poor, etc.
- Further implement hunger alleviation and poverty reduction programmes to improve the living standards of the people, especially for victims of trafficking and families at high risk.
- Governments should mobilize all human and financial resources to combat human trafficking.
- Governments and local authorities should have policies and measures to give appropriate support for children to find suitable jobs to start their careers.

Laws and policies

- We want laws to protect children's rights.
- Establish institutions that can provide legal assistance to protect the rights of children.
- Punish traffickers and illegal agents severely.

- There should be international cooperation to combat illegal agents involved in cross-border labour migration.
- Give more power to officials, but also control them.
- Crack down on corruption and bribery.
- Forbid drug and alcohol abuse by officials at border checkpoints.
- Do not seize returnees' wages and property at checkpoints when they come back of their own choice.
- Close down karaoke bars linked to sex services.
- Supplement national laws, and make them more effective.

Child Labour

- Take action against the involvement of children in hard work and labour exploitation.
- Punish severely people who use child labour.
- Allow children to do part-time work that is clearly defined in terms of time, forms and working conditions.
- Governments should be more concerned about children in poverty.

Child Rights and the Family

- We want adults to understand children.
- Adults should give children opportunities to participate in useful activities that do not have bad effects on children, especially participation in combating trafficking.
- Governments should take children's rights more seriously.
- Governments should grant nationality to all children born in their country.
- Families should pay close attention to taking care of their children.
- Governments should take care and control media that have a bad influence on children.
- Governments should support any organizations who provide welfare in children's best interests.

Advocacy and Awareness Raising

- Strengthen advocacy on trafficking issues, especially trafficking in children and women.
- Governments must provide opportunities for, and facilitate, peer education on relevant child rights issues, including trafficking.
- An international Anti-trafficking Day should be designated.
- Set up parents' committees in communities to talk about possible problems children can face when they migrate.
- Raise awareness among all community members – including teachers, children, adults and parents – on women and children trafficking issues: the root causes, tricks used by traffickers, legislation, children's rights, etc.
- Materials and media about trafficking issues, produced by children themselves, should be available at all levels where children and relevant adults can easily access them. These media could include: leaflets, posters, CDs and VCDs, audio tapes, TV, radio and internet.
- Awareness raising about trafficking should be incorporated into primary and secondary school curricula.
- Governments should facilitate sharing good experiences and enable study exchange.

Education

- Governments should provide opportunities for free, quality education to all children – in particular children at high risk of trafficking and victims of trafficking.
- Provide scholarships to poor children without discrimination, even if they do not have nationality in the country where they are residing.
- All people, in particular children and women at high risk and victims of trafficking, should have access to marketable vocational training and specific skills training.
- Provide non-formal education literacy programmes in communities for children and women at high risk or victims of trafficking.

Victim Support

- Victims of trafficking must have equal rights with other people, with no discrimination.
- Society must be prepared to accept and give opportunities to victims of trafficking.
- Rescue centres and taskforces must be established to find the victims and rescue them quickly.
- Governments must prepare better the return process while considering victims' feelings, safety and need for mental support.
- Victims should be taken care of and be given good advice. Ensure that they have access to health care.
- Victims must be provided with both education and vocational training programmes, and they must have access to health services free of charge.
- Victims should be able to take part in information dissemination about trafficking.

We want to see results. We want governments to take serious action against trafficking. We will follow up and examine the activities of governments.

We want governments to publish their promises and reports in the mass media: internet, radio, newspapers, television.

We may need to meet you again to learn the progress you have made in your actions – after one year at national level and after two years at regional level.

We thank you and hope you will give special consideration to our requests. We would also like to thank the governments and international organizations that have supported us to be part of anti-human trafficking activities.

We hope that our proposals will really happen, and that our guests in this room will cooperate seriously.

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Brochure introducing the Voices of Children initiative





**Mekong
Children's
Forum** on
Human Trafficking
11 - 17 October 2004
Bangkok, Thailand





Save the Children

**ILO MEKONG SUB-REGIONAL PROJECT TO COMBAT
TRAFFICKING IN CHILDREN AND WOMEN and SC UK
CROSS-BORDER ANTI-TRAFFICKING PROJECT**

Background

The ILO's Mekong Project on Trafficking in Children and Women and the SC UK's Cross Border Anti-Trafficking Project are jointly pursuing an advocacy initiative, *Voices of Children*, as part of their 2003 Partnership Agreement. The initiative, a response to the absence of children's participation in regional policy discussions on human trafficking, brings to the fore the views and experiences of children who have been trafficked or are at risk of human trafficking. Through strong children's participation, *Voices of Children* aims to affect positive policy and attitudinal changes at all levels.

The Mekong Children's Forum on Trafficking is the inaugural activity of the Joint Advocacy Initiative. The forum provides a venue for children's views, and actively recognizes the importance of children's contribution to the development of policies and programs against the trafficking of children. A series of national advocacy events in Cambodia, China (Yunnan and Guanzhi provinces), Lao PDR, Thailand and Vietnam precede the Forum.

The Forum and the activities that lead up to it are designed to complement the Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative Against Trafficking (COMMIT), a sub-regional government process that aims to develop coordinated and comprehensive government policy and program interventions to end human trafficking. The COMMIT is being supported by the United Nations system through the UN Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking in the Greater Mekong Sub-region (UNIAP) that acts as the COMMIT Secretariat.

Objectives

1. To provide a venue for children in the Mekong sub-region to collectively articulate their perspectives on the issue of trafficking and share their experiences in participating in anti-trafficking action
2. To facilitate a process for children to contribute to the design of policies and programs addressing trafficking at the sub-regional level
3. To demonstrate the value of participatory approaches in the search for sustainable solutions to the problem of trafficking



Photo by SC UK

Outputs

1. An agenda for action, defined and developed by children reflecting their priorities and recommendations to end human trafficking in the sub-region
2. Documentation of children's perspectives and experiences related to human trafficking; the development of operational guidelines for adults, facilitators and trainers on child participation

The children's agenda for action and the documentation of their perspectives and experiences will serve as key advocacy material to be shared with other forums, gatherings, and organizations that aim to end human trafficking.

Their agenda for action will become a key reference for ILO-IPEC and SC UK in refining their programs in the sub-region. It will be

used as a guide for advocacy, capacity building, and developing partnerships with children.

ILO-IPEC and SC UK at national and regional levels will support the implementation of priority mechanisms and actions that the children might decide to explore, and implement.

For more information, please contact :

Save the Children (UK)

Tel. +66-(0)-2684-1286

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ILO-IPEC

Tel. +66-(0)-2288-2057

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www.mekongchildrensforum.com

Process

At the **country** level, the ILO-IPEC - SC UK teams will :

- Initiate a process of capacity building for children's participation
- Organize in collaboration with other international and national partners, forums for sharing children's views and experiences on human trafficking other worst forms of child exploitation. Children who participate in ongoing anti-trafficking programs – at risk, or formerly trafficked will prepare advocacy statements that summarize their exposure and experiences on human trafficking; their analysis of its causes and consequences; their recommendations and calls for action to government and civil society at large. These forums provide the platform for dialogues with senior officials participating in the COMMIT process.

Linkage to the COMMIT

The Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking (COMMIT) process gives an excellent opportunity for the children to exercise their rights to participation and actively influence the development of national and sub-regional anti-trafficking policies.

The ILO-IPEC, SC UK and the Children's Forum will, at both the national and sub-regional level, actively engage government senior officials and ministers participating in the COMMIT, to advocate that children's participation find a recognition in the Mekong Sub-regional Ministerial Declaration during the COMMIT and most importantly, in the resulting coordinated actions of governments in addressing trafficking.

At the **sub-regional** level, the two organizations will :

- Organize the Mekong Children's Forum on Trafficking as the culminating joint advocacy event planned for October 11-17, 2004. The conference will bring together child representatives from 5 countries, selected in open and transparent processes at the national level, to commonly define an action plan reflecting the children's priorities and recommendations on anti-trafficking policies, programs and activities.
- Document children's perspectives and experiences related to human trafficking with a joint publication and audio-visual documentation that presents:

The process of the Mekong Children's Forum, capturing the children's perspectives and experiences on trafficking;

Organizational guidelines on the use of participatory methodologies



Photo by SC UK

Timetable of Key Events

DATE	LOCATION	LEAD ORGANIZATION
August 22-25	Viet Nam Children's Forum: Hanoi	ILO-IPEC & SC UK with UNICEF, IOM, UNIAP
August 27-30	Thai Children's Forum: Chiang Mai	ILO-IPEC with Thai partner organizations
August 28-31	China Provincial Forum: Guangxi, China	SC UK & ILO-IPEC with national partners organizations
September 9-10	Cambodia Children's Forum: Phnom Penh	ILO with UNICEF, IOM, World Education, UNIAP
September 16	Briefing to Mekong Partner Organizations, UN Building, Bangkok	ILO-IPEC & SC UK
September 21-24	Lao Children's Forum: Vientiane	SC UK & ILO-IPEC
October 11-17	Mekong Children's Forum: WE-Train, Bangkok, Thailand	ILO-IPEC & SC UK
October 15	Dialogue with Senior Officials, News Conference, UN Visit to UN Convention Center, UN Building	

Children's information packs for the Mekong Children's Forum

VI

The first information pack

This information pack was sent to children in their own languages between one and three weeks before the Mekong Children's Forum.



MEKONG CHILDREN'S FORUM

"Human Trafficking – The Voices of Mekong Children"

CHILDREN'S INFORMATION PACK

Dear [please insert child's name]

Hello from all of us at the Voices of Children Secretariat and Organizing Committee!

We are very happy to hear that you are coming to Bangkok for the Mekong Children's Forum "Human Trafficking – the Voice of Mekong Children". We look forward to hearing what you have to say. We are doing our best to make sure that this will be an exciting, educational and fun trip for you!

Trafficking in children is a serious problem in the Greater Mekong Subregion – which is Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam. Many children in these countries are victims of trafficking and exploitation. Many more children in these countries are at risk of trafficking.

The Mekong Children's Forum will be a chance for you and other children from Cambodia, China (Guangxi and Yunnan provinces), Lao PDR, Thailand and Vietnam to discuss what you think about trafficking in the Greater Mekong Subregion and what you want to tell your governments and others about the problem of trafficking – and the solutions.

With this letter you will find some background information about the Forum and about what we will be discussing and why:

- "What is Voices of Children?"
- "Who Are Save the Children UK and ILO-IPEC?"
- "Introduction to Trafficking in Children"

- "Ending Trafficking in Children and Helping the Victims of Trafficking"
- "Trafficking and Children's Rights"
- "Your Rights" – which is a list of all of the rights that you and all children have.
- "Introduction to COMMIT"
- "Introduction to Advocacy and the Media"
- Some stories about children who have been trafficked

All you will receive these documents. We hope you will have time to read them, to think about them, and to discuss them with your friends.

Voices of Children Secretariat and Organizing Committee



Hi! My name is Mark and I work for Save the Children UK in Bangkok. I am the head of Save the Children UK's South and Southeast Asia and Pacific Regional Office.



Hello, my name's Apple. I work for Save the Children UK. I come from the North of Thailand. I am responsible for advocacy.



Hello! I'm Edel from the Philippines. I'm the head of Save the Children UK's Cross-border Anti-trafficking Project.



Hello! My name is Thetis. I'm from the Philippines. I am the head of ILO-IPEC's project on trafficking in women and children in the Greater Mekong Subregion.



Hi! I'm Allan from Canada. I live in Thailand and work at ILO-IPEC. My work is mostly involved with advocacy.



Hi! I'm Eriko. I come from Japan. I work for ILO-IPEC. I work mostly with Viet Nam and Cambodia.



Hi! My name is Anna. I am from a small island in Sweden. But I have lived in Asia for four years. I work for ILO-IPEC TICW. I work especially with China, Thailand and Lao PDR.



Hi! I'm Kritsana. I'm Thai and I have been helping SC UK and ILO-IPEC to organize the Mekong Children's Forum.



Hi! I'm Caspar. I'm from England, but I live in Thailand. I've prepared this information pack. I hope you enjoy reading it!

We are all looking forward to meeting you at the Mekong Children's Forum! See you there!

Voices of Children

Children speak out on trafficking in children



< Voices of Children is a joint initiative of Save the Children UK and ILO-IPEC. Through Voices of Children, we hope we can make people listen to – and act on – children's views about trafficking. The main activity of Voices of Children is a set of Children's Forums in the Greater Mekong Subregion.



< In August and September 2004, children from the Greater Mekong Subregion came together to discuss what their governments, and other people, should do about trafficking in children in their countries.

In every country, the children produced an "Agenda for Action" on trafficking in children.



< Five children from each country (except Myanmar, unfortunately) will come to the Mekong Children's Forum on human trafficking in Bangkok in October.

At the Mekong Children's Forum, children will talk about trafficking in children in the region, especially trafficking from one country to another. Together, the children will make an "Agenda for Action" for the Greater Mekong Subregion.



< We will make sure that what children say in the Mekong Children's Forum is heard far and wide – especially by the people who can really make a difference.

We all look forward to meeting you all at the Mekong Children's Forum and hearing what you have to say!



ALLAN



ERIKO



THETIS



KRITSANA



MARK



APPLE



ANNA



CASPAR

The Greater Mekong Subregion

The Greater Mekong Subregion is an area (or "subregion") that includes six countries – Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam. The Mekong River passes through all of these countries. In China, only the southern provinces of Yunnan and Guangxi are usually included in the Greater Mekong Subregion.



Who Are ILO-IPEC and Save the Children UK?



Save the Children UK

Save the Children UK is a leading international non-governmental organization working for children's rights.

Save the Children UK works in more than 60 countries, helping children in the world's poorest communities.

Save the Children UK works for:

- A world which respects and values every child
- A world which listens to children and learns
- A world where all children have hope and opportunity



< In 2001, Save the Children UK established a project called the Regional Cross-border Community-based Initiatives Against Trafficking of Children. To make it easier, let's call it the Cross-border Project.

The Cross-border Project tries to help children vulnerable to being trafficked, children who have already been trafficked, and children who have been exploited or abused when they tried to migrate or after they have already migrated. We focus our work in communities close to the borders between the six countries of the Greater Mekong Subregion, where many migrant and trafficked children come from. The children we try to help include:

- Children from over 100 ethnic groups
- Children who do not have support and care from their families
- And children who are living in extreme poverty.



< I'm in charge of the Cross-border Project. Through the Cross-border Project, we hope we can help to achieve these things:

- Children, communities and local partners (such as NGOs, community groups, local officials) work together to solve problems linked to trafficking in children, and to protect the most vulnerable migrant children.
- Children, their families and communities in target areas know more about the risks associated with trafficking and migration, and tell other people about these risks.
- Children have more and better opportunities to study and to make a living in their home communities, before and after they migrate.
- Governments and other stakeholders address the problems that actually cause trafficking, protect the rights of child victims of trafficking, and help these children to return to their homes safely.

We try our best to involve children, as well as their families, in all that we do – and to encourage children and their families to take action for themselves.



ILO-IPEC

The ILO is an agency of the United Nations (UN) that is concerned with the rights of workers and employers. We also work with your governments.

ILO does many different types of work. One ILO programme is especially interesting for you. This programme is called IPEC. In IPEC, we try to prevent children from doing work that they are not old enough to do or that is too dangerous for them. IPEC also helps children who are already working to go back to school or receive training for less dangerous work.



< I'm the head of ILO-IPEC's Mekong Sub-regional Project to Combat Trafficking in Children and Women (which we call "TICW", which sounds like "Tick double-yoo"). TICW began in 2000. We work in five countries:

- Cambodia
- China (Yunnan province)
- Lao PDR
- Thailand
- Viet Nam



< Through TICW, we want to reduce trafficking in children and women for labour and sexual exploitation by finding ways to prevent it from happening in the first place. That is why your views are so important to us.

In TICW we mainly try to help children aged between 10 and 17 years old, because children in your age group often migrate and are particularly at risk of being exploited or abused by unfair employers. We also try to help young women, because they are also particularly vulnerable to this kind of human trafficking.



< In TICW, we work not only with children and young women who may become victims of trafficking but also government officials, workers' organizations, and business and community leaders to create a Greater Mekong Subregion where human trafficking will no longer happen. We also believe that the public at large can do more to help children and young women who fall victim to trafficking.

We have four main areas of work, and we try to involve children (and their parents and communities) as much as possible.

1. Making migration safer: We work with many different people, including children and communities, to make it safer for girls, boys and young women to migrate, with less risk of being trafficked or exploited.
2. Reducing demand: We are trying to find out exactly who exploits trafficked children and young women, why they do it, and how they are able to continue doing it. When we know more, we will try to help put traffickers and exploiters out of business.
3. Advocacy and information: We try to inform children and young women, and their families and communities, better about the dangers of trafficking and exploitation and how to avoid them. Using the mass media, and other ways, we also try to let society know that trafficking and exploitation are wrong but are still happening – and that everyone, including governments and the public, should do what they can to stop it.
4. Empowering communities: Often, trafficked children and young women come from poor or weak communities. We try to help the community members to find new ways to earn a living and to cooperate to protect each other.

What is COMMIT?



< There's a good reason why the Voices of Children forums are taking place now. At the end of October 2004, government ministers from Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam will meet in Yangon, Myanmar, to plan how they should work together against the trafficking of children and adults.



< This initiative is called COMMIT, which stands for the "Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative Against Trafficking".



< Save the Children UK and ILO-IPEC believe it is important that the ministers and officials in COMMIT hear what children have to say about this. It is important because children are trafficked, and therefore they know what it is like and what problems lead to it. Also, children have the right to be listened to when it comes to matters that affect them. All the governments in the Greater Mekong Subregion have ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (see the factsheet on Your Rights!) – and that means they have promised that they will listen to children.



< We will do our best to make sure that the ministers understand why they should listen to children when they are making their Plan of Action on human trafficking. And we will make sure that they hear what children from the Greater Mekong Subregion have to say.



< Together, we hope we can persuade the ministers and senior officials to agree on a Plan of Action that helps and protects children from the dangers of trafficking, and ensures that children's voices will always be listened to when trafficking in children is discussed in the Greater Mekong Subregion.

COMMIT Timetable

There will be four important COMMIT meetings.



< SOM 1: This took place in Bangkok, Thailand at the end of July 2004. Senior Officials from the six countries produced a first version of the COMMIT Declaration. The COMMIT Declaration talks about what sorts of things should be in the COMMIT Plan of Action.

SOM 2: At this meeting, in October 2004, Senior Officials from the six countries will prepare a nearly-final version of the COMMIT Declaration, for Ministers to agree on.

The Ministerial Meeting: This will take place in Yangon, the capital of Myanmar, straight after SOM 2 – from 28–30 October. Ministers and Senior Officials from the six countries will agree on the final version of the COMMIT Declaration.

SOM 3: This will probably be in February 2005. Senior Officials from the six countries will produce the COMMIT Plan of Action. After that, all six countries will start to follow the Plan of Action.

At the Mekong Children's Forum, we will tell you more about COMMIT.

Advocacy and Media



< Save the Children UK and ILO-IPEC have agreed to work together on "Voices of Children". This is an "advocacy" project to try to make sure children's voices are listened to when people discuss trafficking in the Greater Mekong Subregion. The Mekong Children's Forum is an important part of the Voices of Children project



< So what is "advocacy"? Very simply, "advocacy" means trying to persuade someone to do something for you – like you might try to persuade your friend to help you with a project.

We call the person who you ask for help the "advocacy target".

The help you want from them is an "advocacy objective".

We have two main advocacy objectives in Voices of Children:

1. To persuade Ministers and Senior Officials who are involved in anti-trafficking work, especially those in the COMMIT process (read the factsheet Introduction to COMMIT), to take into account children's views when they make plans and take action to combat human trafficking;
2. To help to change people's attitudes (the public, governments, and others) so that they believe that children's participation in action against human trafficking is important.

Overall, we want people to understand that children should be asked for their opinions and listened to when we work against human trafficking in the Greater Mekong Subregion.

For Objective 1, our "advocacy targets" are the Ministers and Senior Officials who are responsible for anti-trafficking measures, especially those who will go to the COMMIT meetings. We will talk to them directly, we will invite them to talk to you, and we will make sure that when they open their newspapers, they read about the Children's Forums and what children have said.

For Objective 2, our main “advocacy targets” are the public in the Greater Mekong Subregion. The best way to communicate with the public is through the Mass Media.



< “Mass media” means newspapers, radio programmes and television programmes. In the Greater Mekong Subregion, millions of people read, hear or watch mass media every day.

We will try to get the Mekong Children’s Forum – and what the children have to say – mentioned in the Mass Media. To do this, we need to talk to journalists, who are the people who collect information that will go in the news.

We are inviting journalists to two events during the Mekong Children’s Forum:

- At the beginning (the opening ceremony), and
- Near the end, after you have met the Ministers and Senior Officials.



< Save the Children UK and ILO-IPEC want to protect you from any harm or embarrassment that might result from unfair stories in the media which your friends, neighbours or other people might see. For this reason, we have told journalists that they should not try to talk to you directly without telling one of the organizers first and they should not photograph or video-tape you unless you have agreed to it. The final decision about whether to speak to journalists will be yours.

Introduction to Trafficking and Migration



< Voices of Children is about trafficking in children. This factsheet gives you some useful information about what we mean when we talk about “trafficking in children,” and why and where trafficking in children happens.



< To help you understand trafficking in children better, we have written some “Trafficking Stories” for you to read. They are also in this information pack.



< You should also read the factsheet about Ending Trafficking and Helping Victims of Trafficking, which tells you how Save the Children UK, ILO-IPEC and others try to stop trafficking and help the victims of trafficking.

What is Trafficking in Children?



< In the year 2000, the United Nations produced an important document that explains exactly what is meant by “Trafficking in Persons”. It also defines “Trafficking in Children”. We usually call this document “The Palermo Protocol”, but its full name is: “The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime”.



< In simple words, the Palermo Protocol says that “Trafficking in Children” means buying, selling, keeping or moving children so that someone can exploit them. We call children who are trafficked “victims of trafficking”. “Children” means anyone under 18 years old.

Children can be trafficked within their own country or from one country to another. When children are trafficked from one country to another, we call this “cross-border trafficking”.

You will also see the phrase “Human Trafficking”. That means trafficking in people – both children and adults.

What is “Exploitation”, and how are children exploited?



< The reason that people traffic children is so that the children can be exploited. This means that someone wants to use the children for their own profit or benefit in a way that harms the children and violates their rights (read the factsheet Trafficking and Children’s Rights). Mostly, children are exploited in what we call the “Worst Forms of Child Labour”. These include:

- Slavery, and things like slavery, such as:
 - Forced labour, which means forcing a child to do work or a service that the child does not want to do, using the threat of some punishment.
 - Debt bondage. Debt bondage is when children have to work for no (or very little) payment until they have paid a “debt” to their employer. Often, the debt is very big and the child has no control over how long it will take to pay the “debt”
- Sexual exploitation. Sexual exploitation of children usually takes the form of prostitution (when an adult takes money from someone else who has sex with the child), making children do pornographic performances (“sex shows”), and taking pornographic photos or videos of children.
- Illegal activities, especially using a child to produce, carry or sell drugs.
- Other types of work that are dangerous for the child’s health, safety or morals. These types of work include, among others, working with dangerous machines or chemicals, working underground, working very long hours, being forced to stay in the workplace, carrying very heavy loads, work in which the child is physically, sexually or psychologically abused. Some examples of this type of work are deep sea fishing, working on construction sites, working in mines, and work in some factories.



< International law says that adults who traffic and exploit children, or help other people to traffic and exploit children, are criminals. But some countries do not yet have their own laws against trafficking in children, so traffickers cannot be arrested and punished. We think all countries should make trafficking in children a crime.

Where Does Trafficking in Children Happen?



< Trafficking in Children happens all around the world. We think about 1.2 million boys and girls are now victims of trafficking around the world. When children are trafficked, they are almost always taken from poorer places (countries, areas or communities) to richer places (often to big cities or border areas of richer countries).

Who gets trafficked?



< Some children have more risk of being trafficked than other children. We say that these children are “vulnerable to trafficking”.

Children (both girls and boys) and women are usually more vulnerable to trafficking than men. This is because in most cultures they have less power to protect themselves, are less likely to complain, or they may have fewer opportunities to study and find good, safe work. Also, people who exploit victims of trafficking usually ask specifically for children and young women.



< In the Greater Mekong Subregion, we have discovered that these kinds of children are vulnerable to trafficking:

- Children from poor families in rural communities or less-developed urban areas
- Children from villages that are affected by internal armed conflict
- Children from ethnic minorities or tribes (if that ethnic group or tribe is not rich or powerful)
- Children who do not have legal citizenship in the country they are in
- Children who are not properly prepared before they migrate (with or without their family)
- Girls who have had less chance to study or to find work
- Children who go to school for a short time, or don’t go to school at all
- Children who have been trafficked before, or who have relatives who have been trafficked before
- Children who are treated worse than other children for some other reason, for example their religion or their tribe or ethnic group
- Children who have lost one or both of their parents
- Children who have an unhappy life in their family – for example, some children are abused by their families, or their families do not take care of them well.

Who are the Traffickers?



< Trafficking often involves a “chain” of several people – people who find children; people who say they can help the child find a job or to travel, or who just abduct the child; people who transport the child from one place to another; people who hide the child, or keep the child for a time; people who sell or buy the child.

Anyone who does one of these things, or cooperates in the process – and knows or believes that the child will be exploited – is a trafficker.

Sometimes the “chain” may be well organized; sometimes the traffickers in the chain do not know each other – they just know that they can get money if they bring a child to a certain place or person.

What is “Migration”?



< Migration means moving to live in a new place. Around the world, more people migrate now than ever before.

People migrate for many reasons, but usually it is because they feel that they can have a better life in a new place. Maybe this is because the new place is safer. Maybe it is because there is more opportunity for work or study in the new place. We call people who migrate “migrants”.

What Is “Cross-border Migration”?



< “Cross-border migration” means migrating from one country to another.

Every country has rules about who can migrate into the country and what jobs they can do there.

Many people migrate without following these rules. Sometimes this is because they do not know the rules. Or some people might just ignore the rules. This is often because they are desperate to leave the place where they live now.

Some employers may know the rules but continue to employ migrants anyway, because they are unable to find local workers to do the job (for the wages the employer wants to pay or in the work conditions that the employer offers) or because they need workers only for a short time.

Because they are afraid of being discovered, arrested and punished, many migrants are afraid to use hospitals, doctors or schools. If someone tries to hurt or exploit them, they are afraid to ask for help from the police or other people. This is why so many cases of abuse and exploitation of migrant workers are never discovered.

The Link between Migration and Trafficking



< Many migrants rely on people to help them to travel and to find work. The people who help them might be strangers or “recruitment companies”. But often they are family members, neighbours or friends. Even so, it is often hard for young migrants to know whether their journey will lead to a good job or to abuse and exploitation.

That is why it is essential that everyone who wants to migrate has the right information and knows how to get help if they are worried that they are in danger of being abused or exploited.

Remember, anyone who helps a child migrate for the purpose of exploitative work is a trafficker.

Ending Trafficking in Children and Helping Trafficking Victims



< Save the Children UK and ILO-IPEC follow some internationally accepted ideas and guidelines when we work to protect children from trafficking and to help the child victims of trafficking.

The ILO “Worst Forms of Child Labour” Convention

ILO-IPEC encourages countries to accept (or “ratify”), and to follow, ILO Convention 182, which is called the “Worst Forms of Child Labour” Convention, or “Convention 182”. Countries who ratify Convention 182 promise to protect children from the Worst Forms of Child Labour (which we described on the factsheet “Introduction to Trafficking and Migration”). The Worst Forms of Child Labour include trafficking, as well types of exploitative work that trafficked children often end up in. The ILO has also made some recommendations about how countries can do this. So far, in the Greater Mekong Subregion, Thailand, China and Viet Nam have ratified Convention 182.

The United Nations Recommended Principles on Human Rights and Human Trafficking



< In 2002, the United Nations published a document called Recommended Principles on Human Rights and Human Trafficking.

The Recommended Principles and Guidelines give advice for governments (or “States”), inter-governmental agencies (like the United Nations, including ILO-IPEC), and non-governmental organizations (NGOs, like Save the Children UK) who want to work against human trafficking.

They are about how to combat human trafficking and how to protect the rights of people who are trafficked – including children.

Below are the most important points that you should know.

Human rights

The trafficked person’s rights (see the factsheet on Your Rights!) must always be respected and protected.

The law

Countries should change their laws, or make new laws, so that:

- ☺ Human trafficking is outlawed.
- ☺ Traffickers, people who help traffickers, people who exploit trafficked persons, and others involved in trafficking can be punished as criminals.
- ☺ The laws protect victims of trafficking.
- ☺ The laws give special protection to children.

Finding and punishing traffickers

So far, very few traffickers have been caught and punished anywhere in the world.

Governments should try harder to find, arrest and punish traffickers, and make sure that police, soldiers, immigration officials and other government officials are not involved in trafficking themselves.

Preventing trafficking

To prevent trafficking, it is important to solve the problems that cause or help it. These include:

- ☺ Problems that make some children more vulnerable to trafficking (see the factsheet Introduction to Trafficking and Migration).
- ☺ Demand, from groups or individuals, for children who they can use for cheap labour, sexual exploitation and other forms of exploitation.
- ☺ Attitudes in society: People in communities and wider society not caring about the situation of trafficked persons, or even being hostile to trafficked persons.
- ☺ Government policies that make it more difficult for people to migrate legally and safely – so migrants have to take risks and are therefore vulnerable to trafficking.

There are many ways to protect children from trafficking. Some of these are:

- ☺ Making sure they can go to school (especially girl children).
- ☺ Teaching young people skills that they can use to earn money without being exploited, when they are ready.
- ☺ Helping poor children's parents to earn more money or get help from the government.
- ☺ Making sure government policies do not pressure children and families to put themselves at risk of trafficking.
- ☺ Making sure all children have their birth registered and have citizenship papers.
- ☺ Making sure that parents, village leaders, teachers, and other adults in the village understand the situation of children when they are trafficked. These adults can work together with local children to protect children from becoming victims of traffickers, and to help children who have been trafficked.
- ☺ Teaching everyone in society about children's rights and about why trafficking is wrong.

Protection and assistance for trafficked persons

It is very important that governments and others quickly and correctly identify that a person has been trafficked. Trafficked persons should be given proper help and protection after they are found. This includes any medical care or counseling that they need because of their experiences. This will help them to recover as well as to prevent them being trafficked or exploited further.

Trafficked persons should not be arrested or punished because they have broken rules about migration (see the factsheet "Introduction to Trafficking and Migration") if it is as a result of being trafficked.

Research and information

We should try to find out as much as possible about trafficking and traffickers, and share what we find out, so that we can work better to prevent and combat trafficking and help victims of trafficking.

We should also pay more attention to types of work where in the past we know that trafficked children have been exploited, including the Worst Forms of Child Labour. For example: domestic work (maids etc.), fishing, small factories, tourism, and entertainment.

The mass media should provide accurate information to help the public to understand about trafficking.

Special considerations for child victims of trafficking

Special help and protection must be given to children, because children are especially vulnerable and have special rights and needs that are different from adults' rights and needs.

Governments (and others) should try to find the parents or legal guardians of child victims of trafficking. The child should be taken back to his or her family only if this is in the child's best interests. The family and the local community should be helped to accept and protect the child.

The child should always be asked about whether he or she wants to return to the family.

Unfortunately, some families or guardians of children who have been trafficked do not accept the child back, and or accept them and then use them for trafficking again, or exploit them in other ways.. In these cases, the child should be provided with good and safe alternative care.

Former child victims of trafficking should be helped to study. If they are not ready to go straight back into school, or if the local school programme is not appropriate for the child, the child should be given special education help.

Nobody should tell other people the names or identities of children who have been victims of trafficking, unless it is really necessary.

Anyone who works with child victims of trafficking should be given special training for working with children and understanding their situation.

Cooperation between countries

A lot of people are trafficked from one country to another. Countries should work together to combat trafficking. Among other things, countries should:

- ☺ Make bilateral (between two countries) and/or regional agreements about how to deal with trafficking;
- ☺ Share information about trafficking;
- ☺ Help each other to get better at preventing and combating trafficking;
- ☺ Help each other to find, arrest and punish traffickers;
- ☺ Help each other to protect former child victims of trafficking and to send them back to their homes, and help them to be accepted in their communities, in a way that fully respects children's rights.
- ☺ Make sure that people who migrate from one country to another are treated properly and not exploited.

Trafficking and Children's Rights

What are "children's rights"?



< Every child – including you – has some special rights. Your government has promised to do all it can to make sure you can enjoy these rights.

Your government made this promise by accepting – what we call "ratifying" – the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

These are the four "central pillars" of children's rights:

1. Non-discrimination: All children have the same rights. ("Discrimination" means treating some people differently from others; "non-discrimination" means treating everyone in the same way.)
2. The best interests of the child: Every time people make decisions that could affect children, they must choose the alternative that is best for children.
3. The right to life, survival and development: All children have a right to live. All children have a right to a safe and healthy life with enough food. Adults should help all children to develop into the best person each child can be.
4. The right to participate: All children have a right to seek information, to say what they think, and to discuss their ideas with others. All children have a right to be asked for their view in any decision that affects them. And the child's view should be taken seriously.



< In this information pack you will find a short version of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. You should read it to find out about all your rights.

< There are some more things you should know about children's rights:

- All children have the same rights, even if they are not in their own country or they are doing something illegal.
- Teachers and parents, as well as other adults such as police, local officials and employers, should respect every child's rights and help children to enjoy them. Your government has promised to help these adults to do so. Your government has also promised to protect children if anyone violates any child's rights.
- Your government has also promised that it will make laws and policies that help every child to enjoy and use their rights. Laws and policies should never limit children's rights.
- Organizations like Save the Children UK and ILO-IPEC help governments to fulfill their responsibilities towards children.

Trafficking and Children's Rights



< All children have a right to be protected from trafficking. Often, children are vulnerable to trafficking because they are not able to enjoy their rights. For example, their right to education, their right to a safe and supportive life at home, or their right to be protected from violence.



< When children are being trafficked, and when they are being exploited after trafficking, these children's rights are being violated. I'm sure that if you read through the Convention on the Rights of the Child you will see many ways that trafficked children have their rights violated. >

Therefore, many of the things that governments can do to prevent trafficking in children, and to help children who are trafficked, are just ensuring that children's rights are always respected.

Your Rights!

This summary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child was prepared in English by the United Nations Children's Fund, UNICEF.

Article 1

Everyone under 18 years of age has all the rights in this Convention.

Article 2

The Convention applies to everyone whatever their race, religion, abilities, whatever they think or say, whatever type of family they come from.

Article 3

All organizations concerned with children should work towards what is best for you.

Article 4

Governments should make these rights available to you.

Article 5

Governments should respect the rights and responsibilities of families to direct and guide their children so that, as they grow, they learn to use their rights properly.

Article 6

You have the right to life. Governments should ensure that children survive and develop healthily.

Article 7

You have the right to a legally registered name and nationality. Also the right to know and, as far as possible, to be cared for by your parents.

Article 8

Governments should respect children's right to a name, a nationality and family ties.

Article 9

You should not be separated from your parents unless it is for your own good – for example, if a parent is mistreating or neglecting you. If your parents have separated, you have the right to stay in contact with both parents, unless this might harm you.

Article 10

Families who live in different countries should be allowed to move between those countries so that parents and children can stay in contact or get back together as a family.

Article 11

Governments should take steps to stop children being taken out of their own country illegally.

Article 12

You have the right to say what you think should happen when adults are making decisions that affect you, and to have your opinions taken into account.

Article 13

You have the right to get, and to share, information as long as the information is not damaging to yourself or others.

Article 14

You have the right to think and believe what you want and to practise your religion, as long as you are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Parents should guide children on these matters.

Article 15

You have the right to meet with other children and young people and to join groups and organizations, as long as this does not stop other people from enjoying their rights.

Article 16

You have the right to privacy. The law should protect you from attacks against your way of life, your good name, your family and your home.

Article 17

You have the right to reliable information from the mass media. Television, radio, and newspapers should provide information that you can understand, and should not promote materials that could harm you.

Article 18

Both parents share responsibility for bringing up their children, and should always consider what is best for each child. Governments should help parents by providing services to support them, especially if both parents work.

Article 19

Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for, and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents or anyone else who looks after them.

Article 20

If you cannot be looked after by your own family, you must be looked after properly, by people who respect your religion, culture and language.

Article 21

If you are adopted, the first concern must be what is best for you. The same rules should apply whether the adoption takes place in the country where you were born or if you are taken to live in another country.

Article 22

If you are a child who has come into a country as a refugee, you should have the same rights as children born in that country.

Article 23

If you have a disability, you should receive special care and support so that you can live a full and independent life.

Article 24

You have the right to good quality health care and to clean water, nutritious food and a clean environment so that you can stay healthy. Rich countries should help poorer countries achieve this.

Article 25

If you are looked after by your local authority rather than your parents, you should have your situation reviewed regularly.

Article 26

The government should provide extra money for the children of families in need.

Article 27

You have a right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet your physical and mental needs. The government should help families who cannot afford to provide this.

Article 28

You have a right to an education. Discipline in schools should respect children's human dignity. Primary education should be free. Wealthy countries should help poorer countries achieve this.

Article 29

Education should develop your personality and talents to the full. It should encourage you to respect your parents, your own and other cultures.

Article 30

You have a right to learn and use the language and customs of your family whether or not these are shared by the majority of the people in the country where you live.

Article 31

You have a right to relax and play and to join in a wide range of activities.

Article 32

The government should protect you from work that is dangerous or might harm your health or education.

Article 33

The government should provide ways of protecting you from dangerous drugs.

Article 34

The government should protect you from sexual abuse.

Article 35

The government should make sure that you are not abducted or sold.

Article 36

You should be protected from any activities that could harm your development.

Article 37

If you break the law, you should not be treated cruelly. You should not be put in a prison with adults and you should be able to keep in contact with your family.

Article 38

Governments should not allow children under 16 to join the army. In war zones, you should receive special protection.

Article 39

If you have been neglected or abused, you should receive special help to restore your self-respect.

Article 40

If you are accused of breaking the law, you should receive legal help. Prison sentences for children should only be used for the most serious offences.

Article 41

If the laws of a particular country protect you better than the Articles of the Convention, then those laws should stay.

Article 42

The government should make the Convention known to all parents and children.

Articles 43-54 are about how adults and governments should work together to make sure all children get all their rights.

Trafficking Stories



< Here are some stories about children who are trafficked. They are based on real stories that children have told us. I hope they will help you to understand what we mean by trafficking.

Meng's Story

Meng and Tam wanted to escape their hard life and get more opportunities. Tam's sister trafficked them to the massage parlour where she worked. The work was not what they expected. They were arrested and sent back to their country. But they decided they would not go home.

Like most of the other children in her village, Meng dreamed of leaving home one day and crossing the border to the neighbouring country. In the village, the only work was farming and a hard life with no money.

A lot of girls from the village migrated across the border to find work. Some of them came back to visit, wearing fashionable new clothes, bringing gifts for their friends and money for their parents.

When Meng was 15, her best friend Tam showed her a letter from her (Tam's) sister, Ae, who had gone across the border. Ae said she worked in a massage parlour. She said some of her customers were rich and she was able to save a lot of money. If any of Tam's friends wanted to go across the border, Ae would help them.

Ae and her new husband came to the village a month later. Meng told Ae she wanted to work in a massage parlour. Two days later, Meng, Tam and three other girls climbed into the back of Ae's husband's pick-up truck. They were all very excited and dressed in their best clothes. This was the start of their new life.

At the border, Ae's husband gave the border guards some money. Then he allowed him to drive across.

Two nights later, they arrived in a city. The car stopped at a big massage parlour. Ae told the girls to go inside.

Inside smelled very bad. Meng saw a brightly lit window, and behind it rows of girls in short dresses with numbers around their necks. They wore a lot of make-up and looked unhappy. Meng and Tam started to feel very uncomfortable. This was different from what Ae had described.

That night, lying on a small bed in a room with some other girls, Ae told Meng and Tam about the work. They would have to massage men and have sex with them. Ae said the owner had paid her to find new girls.

Meng and Tam cried that night, and many nights afterwards.

Meng and Tam worked in the massage parlour for several months. They never ran away, because Ae said the boss would find them and punish them.

One night, the police raided the massage parlour. The customers ran away. But the police took all the girls to an immigration detention centre. The girls had to pay a big fine.

Two months later, the police took Meng and Tam back to the border and told them to go back to their own country. On the other side of the border, the border guards took some more of their money.

Meng and Tam were too ashamed to go back to their village. As soon as they could, they found someone else to take them back across the border.

Dung's Story

Dung's family were illegal migrants, working in construction sites. One day, a woman told her about a good job in a dress shop. In fact, the job was very bad. Dung was never paid and had to do domestic work as well as sewing. She was treated cruelly, and was never allowed to go out. Luckily, a neighbour knew that Dung was being mistreated and contacted an NGO who came to rescue Dung.

When Dung was growing up, her family always migrated. For half the year they worked at fruit plantations. For the other half, they went to cities to work on construction sites. As soon as Dung could walk confidently by herself, she helped her parents to work.

Whenever Dung's family moved from one workplace to another, they went with a big group. Most of the group spoke the same language. But it was not the language that their bosses and other people around them spoke. Dung's parents and neighbours warned her that she should not talk loudly in front of strangers, and she should avoid the police, or they would have trouble.

When Dung was 12, the family were working at a construction site. The boss introduced them to a woman who said she was looking for people to work in a dress-making shop in another city. Dung and her parents agreed it would be a good job for Dung. A few days later, they said goodbye.

When Dung arrived at her new employer's house, she couldn't believe how big and luxurious it was. The woman who had offered her the job gave Dung to the employer, and then went away.

Dung's new employer was a middle-aged woman. She took her to a small room with a mat on the floor. It was the first time Dung had her own bedroom, and she was very happy that night.

But the work was hard. The house had a big wall around it, and the gate was always locked. Dung could not go out. Every morning, she had to wake up before dawn and clean the house and wash dishes. Then she had to sew dresses with a sewing machine for several hours in a small room in the house. In the evening she had to do more domestic chores until nearly midnight.

Dung's employer was very cruel. If Dung made a mistake with a dress or worked too slowly, the employer would scream at her and hit her with a wooden stick. A few times, when Dung dropped a plate or a glass, the employer would pour boiling water on her. Dung was never paid. She could hardly understand her employer's language. She did not dare to complain.

The employer's neighbours knew about Dung, and they felt pity for her. They knew that the way the employer treated Dung was wrong. Eventually, a neighbour told an NGO that helps child workers about Dung.

A few days later, some people from the NGO came with the police to rescue Dung. They took Dung to the NGO's centre. People from the NGO listened to Dung talk about her experiences and tried to make her feel better about it. They told her about her rights, and taught her some other useful things about how she could protect herself in the future.

The people at the NGO asked Dung about her parents, and helped her to find them. Then Dung went back to her family.

Kian's Story

Kian was trafficked many times. One night he was arrested selling flower garlands. Because he did not know who his parents were or where they lived, he was kept in a special children's home. But he did not like it there and ran away.

When Kian's father went to prison, Kian's mother did not know what to do. She had four children and no income. Kian's father had to pay a big fine before he would be released from prison.

Kian was the youngest child, only two years old. A stranger offered to buy Kian. He said he would give Kian's mother enough money to pay the fine and to buy food for a few weeks. Kian's mother felt very sorry, but she believed she had no alternative.

The man took Kian across the border into a neighbouring country. They went to a big market town. Another man bought Kian from the stranger, and took Kian to the capital city of the country.

A gang made Kian beg for money on the street all day. In the evening, the gang took Kian and other young children to a busy area and told them to go into restaurants to sell flowers and packets of tissue paper.

Men from the gang watched Kian and took the money he collected. If he did not collect enough money, he got no food.

When Kian was five, the gang sold him to a fruit-preparation factory in a slum. All day, he and other women and children had to take mangoes and guavas out of the pickling water and peel and slice them. The pickling water burned his hands and made them red and swollen.

In the evenings, Kian was free to go out with his friends. Most nights, they went with a woman from the slum and sold flower garlands in the street. Usually, if the police caught them, the woman just paid a small fine and they were released again.

Then one night, the police arrested them and took them all to the police station. Kian and the other foreign children were taken to an immigration detention centre.

Kian did not know where he was born or what his parents' names were. He was taken to a special children's home, where he lived with a lot of other children. It was boring, and Kian often got into trouble. One day he ran away and went back to his friends at the slum.

Ming-Ling's Story

Ming-Ling's life was difficult in her village. She did not go to school and had to work hard. When she went to the City to find her friend, she was tricked by an old woman who sold her into sexual exploitation. Ming-Ling managed to escape with another girl, and they found a job in a factory.

Ming-Ling had only been outside her village once, and that was only to the nearest town. Ming-Ling's parents told her very little about the world outside the village. She didn't go to school. Instead, she helped her mother on the farm and doing housework.

When Ming-Ling was 15, her best friend Cheng went to the City. She found work as a trainee in a beauty salon. Compared to people in the village, Cheng earned quite a lot of money.

When there was a traditional festival in the village, Cheng came back to visit.

"I have my own apartment now, with my boyfriend," Cheng told Ming-Ling. "You should come to visit us."

When Cheng had returned to the City, Ming-Ling thought about Cheng's invitation a lot. Ming-Ling was not very happy. Ming-Ling's father was addicted to opium, and did not work. The family were very poor, and it was difficult to survive.

One day, Ming-Ling decided to go and visit Cheng. She took the bus to the City.

When the bus arrived at the bus station, it was evening. The City was much bigger than she expected. Cheng tried to ask some people how to get to the area where Cheng lived. But their answers confused her. She just stood at the bus station and wanted to cry.

An old woman came to talk to Ming-Ling. She offered to help Ming-Ling find Cheng. As Ming-Ling walked away with the woman, she heard people say "It's that bad woman again." But Ming-Ling just ignored it.

The old lady took Ming-Ling on a local bus. She offered Ming-Ling some food and water. Ming-Ling fell asleep.

When Ming-Ling woke up, it was very dark. The old lady told her to get off the bus.

The place where the old lady took Ming-Ling was a bar and restaurant quite far outside the City.

The owner of the restaurant told Ming-Ling she should clean up and wash dishes during the day and the evening. If customers wanted to have sex with her, she must go with them to one of the bungalows behind the restaurant.

The owner said he had paid the old lady to find him girls to work for him. He would keep Ming-Ling's pay until she had paid him for the money he gave to the old lady.

Ming-Ling worked like this for three months. There were other girls working at the restaurant. Ming-Ling became friends with another girl called Liw, and they decided to try to escape.

One day, a truck-driver stopped at the restaurant to eat. Ming-Ling told him her story and asked him to help her and Liw to get to the City. He felt pity for the girls and agreed to help them.

Back in the City, Ming Ling and Liw were able to find work in a small factory making jewelry.

Forum information pack

Children received a section information pack on the first day of the Mekong Children's Forum. This included the whole of the first information pack, all national forum agendas for action, and the following additional sheets. Once again the pack was all translated into children's national languages.

Adults in the Mekong Children's Forum

The Mekong Children's Forum is your forum, a chance for children to share your thoughts and reach decisions together. However, you will meet several adults at the Forum.

You've already met a few of us in the information we sent you. You will also meet chaperones, facilitators and some others.

Chaperones are adults who have come with you from [YOUR COUNTRY] to take care of you. Your chaperone is here to look after you because your parents will not be with you. It is your chaperone's job to make sure that you are safe and that your rights are being met. Your chaperone should also be willing to help you whenever you have questions, needs or problems.

We will use English language to discuss things in the Mekong Children's Forum. To help you talk to children from other countries, the chaperones will also translate for you. The chaperones should be willing to translate for you in the evenings and outside the forum too. They should translate everything that is said to you and everything you wish to say.

Facilitators are the people who have planned the activities in the Mekong Children's Forum and will help you to go through the activities from day to day. They will try to make the Forum interesting and fun for you.

Organizers are the people you met in the information sheets we sent you a few weeks ago. Most of us work for Save the Children UK or ILO-IPEC. We will introduce ourselves to you in the Mekong Children's Forum.

Journalists. As we told you in the factsheet on "Advocacy and Media", we have invited some journalists from mass media to come to the Mekong Children's Forum. You will only meet them for a short time on Wednesday of the Forum – but we have also invited one newspaper, the Bangkok Post, to send a journalist to attend the whole Forum. We have asked the journalists to respect your privacy.

Senior Officials and Ministers have been invited from governments in the Greater Mekong Sub-region to come and talk to you on Wednesday about your experiences and ideas about human trafficking. Most of them will be involved in the COMMIT.

!! All adults in the Mekong Children's Forum have been asked to follow the "Code of Conduct for Adults", which is on the back of this factsheet. If you feel that any adult is not following the Code of Conduct, or if you feel uncomfortable or worried about how an adult is behaving towards you or towards any other child, please let an organizer or facilitator know. We will try to help the problem quietly and in a way that protects you. !!

Code of Conduct for Adults

Voices of Children recognizes that children's unique experiences and perspectives add a new dimension to the human trafficking debate.

The Mekong Children's Forum is a chance for children to speak out – and for adults to listen to them. Let's hear what children have to say, in their own words. Adults are here to:

- Support the children with our time and resources
- Answer children's questions
- Make sure the children are safe and comfortable

As an adult coming to the Mekong Children's Forum, you should:

- Put the best interests of each child above any other consideration.
- Treat all children with respect all the time.
- Respect the rights of children to think freely and express themselves freely.
- Try to answer children's questions – honestly and completely.
- Use simple language and clear explanations that children can understand.
- Respect the right to privacy and confidentiality of all children.

You should NEVER:

- ⊗ Use physical violence, or the threat of physical violence, against a child.
- ⊗ Use language or behaviour that could be offensive, humiliating, upsetting or threatening to a child.
- ⊗ Pressure a child to give personal information about themselves, or do or say anything else against their will.
- ⊗ Do things for children of a personal nature that they can do for themselves.

Every child at the Mekong Children's Forum is under the care of a chaperone. Always inform the child's chaperone before you spend time separately with a child.

Let's join hands to protect children from danger, abuse and exploitation – if you have any doubts or suspicions that a child or children may be at risk, please share it with the organizers.

Mekong Children's Forum

Children speak out on human trafficking

Welcome to Bangkok!

We from ILO-IPEC and SC UK are very happy to have you here for the Mekong Children's Forum on human trafficking. We look forward to getting to know each of you and hearing what you have to say during the next few days.

There will be 25 children in total at the Mekong Children's Forum: five children each from Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam. All of the children you will meet have taken part in national forums on human trafficking during the last two months. You will hear about their national forums and about trafficking in children in their countries. We hope you will also make some new friends. There will be two adult translators from each country who can help you to talk together.

We have prepared this information pack to help you during the Mekong Children's Forum. Some of the contents you have seen before, but some are new. We hope you can find time to read the new factsheets before the Forum starts. In this information pack you will find the following:

- ☺ **A Programme** – What we will be doing every day during the Mekong Children's Forum
- ☺ Some factsheets on **"Adults You Will Meet During the Forum"** and on **"What You Might Be Expected to Do during the Forum"**
- ☺ The **"Agendas for Action"** that children in the different countries prepared during their national forums.
- ☺ Some **basic information** about the Mekong Children's Forum and the We-Train Centre
- ☺ The 10 **factsheets** that you have already received during the last few weeks
- ☺ An **Emergency Card** – with useful telephone numbers and the address of the We-Train Centre, in case you get lost or have a problem.
- ☺ **Pencils and paper**

This will be your Forum, and we hope it will be interesting, comfortable and fun. We also hope that it will be a chance for us all to help to end trafficking in children!

Good luck!

The ILO-IPEC and Save the Children UK Voices of Children Team

Some Things You Might be Expected to Do At the Mekong Children's Forum

Documenting

How will people hear about the Mekong Children's Forum, and about the messages that you want to tell them?

We hope that a lot of people will hear about it in the mass media (television, radio and newspapers). Also, you will be able to give your messages to the senior officials and other visitors who you will meet during the Forum.

But we also want to produce two other "documents" of the Mekong Children's Forum. We will show these to other children, to other organizations and to other officials, so that everyone can learn about the Mekong Children's Forum, and about what you said and did.

VIDEO: One will be a video film. People from a Thai organization called MAG will be filming sometimes during the Forum. This will be your film and you are the stars, so let us or MAG know what you think. Let's make it fun!

BOOKLET: We also want to make a booklet that presents your messages, your paintings and your words. The book will tell people about the Mekong Children's Forum and about the national forums. We want to make it colourful and attractive – and we want you to write it!

Every day during the Forum, we will be giving different teams a tape recorder, and asking them to talk about what has happened during that day, and about their national forum. Anyone else who wants to make a comment or give a message can add it to the tapes. We will use what you tell us on the tapes to write the booklet.

Evaluation

The Mekong Children's Forums and the national children's forums are the first children's forums that ILO-IPEC and SC UK have organized together. We're sure we have a lot to learn – and there is a lot that we can learn from you.

We are always interested to hear your comments – What did you really like in the Forums? What didn't you like? What could we do differently next time? Please let us know.

Facilitation

Maybe you want to try being the chairperson in some discussions, or showing everyone how to play a game or a song or dance from your country in the Mekong Children's Forum. We will try to provide opportunities for you to do it.

Helping Each Other

While we are all at the Mekong Children's Forum together, let's try to help each other. Try to keep the room tidy. Don't come late to sessions. If we all help each other, the chores will go quickly and there will be more time for relaxing.

Follow-up information pack

A third follow-up information pack was sent to the Mekong Children's Forum participants in their own languages.

Preliminary Guidelines for Organizing Human Trafficking – Voices of Children National Forums

VII

Part A: Background

Part B: Principles and Practice Standards

Part C: Guidelines on Child Protection

Part D: Planning the Forums

Part E: Media Guidelines

Part F: Recommended Resources

Introduction

Dear Colleagues

This set of Guidelines is intended to be used by the organizers of the Voices of Children National Children's Forums. It covers the main ethical and practical concerns involved with an event like this and how we suggest that you address them. We hope that it will make your job – of planning and implementing the forums in a way that maximizes children's participation and effective advocacy, and minimizes risks – much easier.

Voices of Children is a concept, a sub-regional initiative that is taking place, mainly, at country level. It is important that is coordinated, and that similar methods and standards are applied in the different countries, aiming for similar objectives and outputs. This is why we are issuing these guidelines from the sub-regional level.

However, we understand that children's participation is a process that is shaped by its context and by the people involved. In each country, you and your partners will have different experiences with children's participation and different relationships with the target group of children. These guidelines are formulated to allow you flexibility – if there are better ways to ensure children's rights and reach the objectives in your context, you should follow them.

What is in the Guidelines?

Part A provides a brief introduction to the Voices of Children process.

Part B outlines the principles and practice standards that you should follow in all matters concerning children's participation in the children's forum.

Because we are inviting a very vulnerable group to participate in the forums, a whole section – Part C – is devoted to principles and practice standards relating the child protection.

Part D contains more practical guidelines on planning the forums, including preparations during the national forum for the Mekong Children's Forum.

Part E covers the important issue of media coverage and how to handle media contact with the participating children in an ethical way.

Part F gives a recommended set of steps to follow when making contact with the children who might participate, and with their parents.

At least Parts A, B, C and E of the guidelines should be translated so that they can be shared with partners and others involved with the national Voices of Children events.

If you have any comments or require any clarifications, please contact our Internal Communications Consultant for Voices of Children, Caspar Trimmer, at caspar@loxinfo.co.th

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A Background Information



A.1 Why Voices of Children?

Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) guarantees all children the right to participate in decisions that directly affect them (with their input given “due weight” according to their age and maturity). But although there is growing awareness of the problem of trafficking in children, and a range of policy initiatives and action have emerged, children’s voices are still scarcely heard in discussions of this gross violation of children’s human rights. The complexity and sensitivity of the challenge posed by child trafficking make it all the more important that children are heard.

A.2 What is Voices of Children?

Voices of Children joint advocacy initiative

The CRC and ILO Convention 182 (the Worst Forms of Child Labour) provide Save the Children UK (SC UK) and ILO-IPEC with strong mandates to push for children’s participation in policy dialogue about trafficking. Both organizations already have contact with a wide range of partners, including children, involved in trafficking prevention and in rescue/rehabilitation/reintegration of young trafficking victims. In addition, between them, both organizations have established working relationships from the highest levels of government down to the grassroots in all six countries of the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS). Finally, both organizations already have experience in engaging children in action and dialogue.

In 2003, SC UK’s Southeast and East Asia and Pacific Regional Office and the International Labour Organization International Programme to Eliminate Child Labour (ILO-IPEC) signed a partnership agreement on anti-trafficking work in the Mekong sub-region. Specifically, this partnership engages ILO-IPEC’s Mekong Sub-Regional Project to Combat Trafficking in Children and Women (TICW) and SC UK’s Cross-Border Anti-Trafficking Project.

As part of this partnership, the two projects are pursuing a joint advocacy initiative, Voices of Children. Voices of Children is a response to the absence of children’s participation in regional policy discussions on human trafficking and brings to the fore the views and experiences of children who have been trafficked or are at risk of being trafficked.

Voices of Children will facilitate a series of forums for children to: share their views and experiences on trafficking in children; comment on responses to the problem in the sub-region; and advocate for policy and action, including the role that children should play in future policy-making and action. National-level children’s forums will be organized in the six GMS countries (in China, only Yunnan province will be involved, while in Thailand, participating children will come from the northern provinces) during August–September 2004. In late 2004 (tentatively 10–16 October), SC UK and ILO-IPEC will organize a sub-regional children’s forum in Bangkok, where child delegates from the national forums will share the outcomes of their national forums and together define advocacy messages and a joint sub-regional Agenda for Action on trafficking in children, which will include action with and by children. The Agenda for Action and advocacy messages will be presented to the senior officials and ministers preparing for the COMMIT second Senior Officials Meeting and Ministerial Consultation.¹

¹ COMMIT is a high-level inter-governmental process among the six Mekong countries (China, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Myanmar) whose main outcome will be a sub-regional Plan of Action to combat trafficking. To agree this Plan of Action, each government will send delegates of ministerial level to a Ministerial Consultation in Yangon, Myanmar in October 2004. The key advocacy objective of the first year of the Voices of Children initiative is to ensure that the COMMIT process and the resulting Plan of Action respect the participation rights of children affected by children. For more information about the COMMIT process, see the attached Introduction to COMMIT.

But Voices of Children does not end there. In organizing the forums, SC UK and ILO-IPEC make a commitment to children not only to support their advocacy and help to promote and implement the children's national and sub-regional agenda for action, but also to support future action by and with children in line with the national and sub-regional Agenda for Action. The two organizations hope that these Voices of Children forums will become annual events.

A.3 Which Children Will Be Involved in the Forums?

- Children from 10 years up, regardless of their gender, beliefs, ethnicity, language, culture, legal status or circumstances;
- Children in areas where there is high vulnerability to trafficking and children with experience of being trafficked;
- Other children actively involved in anti-trafficking work.

In this first year of Voices of Children, for practical reasons only children who have contact with SC UK/ILO-IPEC partner organizations working on trafficking will be involved. As Voices of Children develops, we should strive to provide more and more children with the opportunity to participate; this will bring us closer to the non-discriminatory, inclusive spirit of the CRC, as well as bringing to the table a wider range of experiences and perspectives.

Note! Because of the limited selection process and lack of a formal representative and consultative structure, we should never claim that the outcomes of the Voices of Children forums represent the voices of all children affected by trafficking in the country or sub-region.

A.4 Purpose of the Forums

1. To give children a chance to share their ideas and experiences and get a broader view of trafficking;
2. To inform children about what is being done (and what is not being done) on their behalf in relation to trafficking – and about what we think could be done;
3. To find out what these children think of what is being done, and what should be done, in terms of policies and actions;
4. To give these children a chance to draw up Agenda for (national or sub-regional) Action on trafficking, reflecting their perspectives on the problems and solutions, their priorities, their suggested solutions, and how they think children should be involved in future decision-making and action;
5. To provide a highly visible platform for these children to share their agenda with concerned organizations, with the public (through the media), with Senior Officials involved in the COMMIT process;
6. Children in the national forums will also be helped to prepare input to the Mekong Children's Forum, including selecting three or four delegates;
7. To plan follow-up and on-going anti-trafficking activities involving children.

Principles and Practice Standards

B

B.1 Children's participation in Voices of Children

The Voices of Children initiative is founded on the belief that children affected by trafficking in children have a fundamental right to participate in shaping the policies and actions that are meant to address the problem. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) establishes this right, while ILO Convention 182 (The Worst Forms of Child Labour) commits signatory governments and the ILO to facilitate this participation in relation to trafficking and all other worst forms of child labour.

The main "participation rights" in the CRC are:

- Art. 12: The right of children to express their views freely in all matters affecting them, with the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity.
- Art. 13: The right of freedom of expression, and the right to seek, receive and share information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers.
- Art. 14: The right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.
- Art. 15: The right of freedom of association and peaceful assembly.

Also guiding Voices of Children are the CRC articles that grant all children equal rights without discrimination of any kind on any grounds (Article 2) and that all actions concerning the child should be take the children's best interests as the most important consideration.

Article 4 of the CRC is clearly relevant in terms of our advocacy for children's voices to be taken into account in the COMMIT process and in subsequent policy-making and action related to trafficking in children:

States Parties shall undertake all appropriate legislative, administrative, and other measures for the rights recognized in the present Convention. ... States Parties shall undertake such measures to the maximum extent of their available resources and, where necessary, within the framework of international co-operation.

B.2 The role of adults in Voices of Children

Voices of Children recognizes that children's unique experiences and perspectives add a new dimension to the human trafficking debate, which helps in the design of more effective policies and actions that more effectively promote the rights of children. However, Voices of Children is an adult-initiated and adult-led process. In relation to the children's participation in Voices of Children, the main roles of adults are:

- Facilitators: Using our time, skills and resources to create an enabling environment and a platform for children;
- Resource persons: Providing information to children and offering advice based on our knowledge and experience, especially when children ask for it;
- Carers: While children are participating in the forums, we take on their parents' responsibility for every child's safety and well-being.

B.3 An enabling environment

We should make every effort to create an enabling environment for children's participation – that is, an environment in which all children can exercise their rights to speak freely and exchange ideas in safety and comfort, with all relevant information and necessary support, confident of being treated with respect, leading to only positive impacts on their lives.

Every adult involved in Voices of Children should contribute to this enabling environment, both in their professional/organizational roles and in the way they act around, and interact with, the children.

Creating enabling environments for children's participation requires respecting some ethical principles. It is the job of forum facilitators to make sure these principles are understood and respected by everyone, both children and adults. It is the job of the forum organizers to make sure that anyone attending the forum is aware of these principles and how they will be realized in the forums:

Voluntary involvement Children's involvement in any initiative should be voluntary. They should also have the right to change their mind about their participation during the process.

Non-discrimination Children's representation should relate to the specific issues in question and an inclusive approach should be adopted.

Provision of and access to information Children need to be sufficiently informed about the purpose, process, expected outcome and implications of their involvement. They should have opportunities to gather and analyse information themselves.

Confidentiality and privacy Children's identity and the information they provide should be kept confidential. Communicating children's information to a wider audience should only be done with their agreement and should not put them at risk.

Avoid putting children at risk Children's involvement may interfere with their education or work. Those who aid children's involvement have to be aware that children may put themselves at risk by expressing their views or discussing sensitive issues in a group. (based on Henk van Beers,) See Part C for guidelines on child protection.

B:3.1 Non-discrimination

Every child participating in Voices of Children should enjoy the same respect and the same privileges, with no favoritism. Every child should have an equal opportunity to speak and be listened to. Documenters must make sure that the documentation fairly represents the contributions of all children. Every effort should be made to enable children to participate regardless of disabilities and linguistic or cultural gaps.

B:3.2 Confidentiality and privacy

Children have a right to privacy regarding personal information. Because we will be publicizing the fact that some or all of the participating children are victims of trafficking or are highly vulnerable, respecting confidentiality and privacy are also crucial for protecting the children from harm.

- Personal information about a participating child, including information that could be used to identify them (including photos, videos and audio recordings) should never be shared with anyone (including journalists) unless there is a demonstrable need for that person to know in the best interests of the child, and the person can be relied on to respect confidentiality. Where there is any doubt, seek the child's consent.
- Information that is shared by a child in confidence should never be shared without the child's consent, unless it is clearly in the best interests of the child and/or risks violating promises made to the child's parents or guardians (for example, if they intend to harm themselves or others, or if they share a plan to run away from the forum).

B:3.3 Voluntary involvement – informed consent

Children's participation should always be voluntary. Children should never be pressured into participating in any role, and you should never just assume that they are willing to participate unless they have recently told you that they are.

To ensure that participation is voluntary, both children and their parents or other legal guardians must give their informed consent to children's participation in Voices of Children forums or other related activities that take them away from their homes, schools or work, or put them at any risk. Informed consent means that before anyone (the child or their parent or guardian) is asked to give consent for anything, they must be given and understand all the relevant facts, including what the child will be expected to do, why they are doing it, and any potential risks that it entails. They must also know that consent can be freely withdrawn at any time.

- Even written consent is not a binding promise or contract. Children and their parents or guardians have the right to withdraw their consent at any time, and without any pressure or criticism.

Section D.3 gives more detailed guidelines on how informed consent should be sought during the Voices of Children process.

B:3.4 Mutual respect

Children's participation should take place within an atmosphere of mutual respect. Mutual respect means respect between and among all children and adults.

- Some ways to show respect are:
- Listen to, and give consideration to, an idea, whoever it comes from;
- Always explain yourself, never say simply "I am right, you are wrong";
- Criticism should be aimed at finding a solution;
- Adjust the way you communicate to the audience; remembering that it is what is understood that is important, not just what you say;
- Be willing to accept disagreement from anyone;
- See others' limitations as reasons to give more time and support, not less;
- Never be tempted to use seniority or physical superiority to win a debate.

B.4 Children speaking for children

... choosing a representative, what this means and why it is being done must be very clear to the children. The process of selection must be transparent. It should develop a sense of integration among children (rather than a sense of competition) and provide enough opportunities for children to get to know other children, helping them make [a] better judgement on who should represent them.²

The Voices of Children forums are opportunities for a group of children with experience and knowledge about the issue of human trafficking to share their experiences and ideas and, based on this, find a common voice. Although the selected children should be encouraged to discuss the forum with their peers beforehand and listen carefully to what they have to say, their role in the forums is to speak from their own experience and opinions, not to act as representatives of their peers.

It is important that children and the adult partner organizations who sponsor them understand that their role is not to represent their sponsoring organizations.

² From: UNGASS Documentation Workshop Report. December 15–16, 2001. National Confederation of Co-operatives (NATCCO), Project 4, Quezon City, Philippines. Prepared by Carie T. Francisco, SC-UK Programme Officer/31 Jan 2002, quoted in *So You Want to Consult with Children* about the COMMIT process, see the attached Introduction to COMMIT.

B.5 Information for children

Children need clear, sufficient, relevant and transparent information related to the process in which they are being asked to participate. The better informed they are, the more involved and committed they will be, and the more meaningfully they can participate. It will also help them to decide if they want to be involved in the first place and, if necessary, helps them choose the best representatives.

Children should receive information about the forum itself, and all relevant background information on the topics that they will be discussing, as early as possible before the forum – they should have time to read it, consider it, do further research, and discuss it with their friends before the forum.

Child-friendly information, whether written or verbal, should:

- acknowledge children's limited experience and developing skills;
- avoid technical jargon;
- not require children to have specific technical knowledge of organizations, laws, conventions, technical concepts etc.; if these need to be mentioned, they should be explained;
- be interesting, engaging and attractive for children with limited literacy and education;
- try to look at trafficking and the related issues from the perspective of these children.

Section D.2 includes some more specific guidance on the information you should provide to children participating in the national forums.

B.6 Planning

Careful, thorough planning will help to create an enabling environment. The children being invited to the national forums will be diverse, and may be overwhelmed by the forum and by the venue. In addition, because the forums should be an empowering process, children may make some unexpected decisions. For these reasons, contingency planning is particularly important. Look through every aspect of your plans and imagine what could go wrong – or go differently – and make sure you have clear plans and procedures in place to deal with unexpected situations.

B.7 Monitoring and evaluation

- As with all children's participation, your monitoring and evaluation plan for the forum should build in a role for children and should look at several dimensions. You will need to monitor and evaluate: logistical/management issues;
- how well you were able to create an enabling environment for children's participation and an advocacy opportunity for children;
- the forum's success in terms of our organizational advocacy objectives.

Children will have a lot to say on these issues; they should also be supported to monitor and evaluate their own success in making full use of the opportunity provided and working together.

You should also plan longer-term monitoring and evaluation of follow-up to the forum (by your own organization, by partners, by children); assess how the children's participation in the forum has affected the lives of children (participants and non-participants) and the work of partner organizations; and what impact your advocacy and the children's advocacy have had.

Monitoring and evaluation should be discussed with the children at the start of the forum or before.

At a minimum, monitoring and evaluation of the national forums should answer the following questions:

General

Was planning adequate to cover challenges and opportunities presented during the forum?

Children's participation

- How and how far were children's rights (especially the participation rights) realized through the national forums?
- Did children feel they were able to participate meaningfully?
- How useful and understandable did children find the information you provided beforehand and during the forum; print, verbal, presentations, other formats?
- How far did children believe you had provided an enabling environment for their participation?
- How much real power did children feel they had to make decisions and influence the shape and outcome of the forum?
- How well matched did children think the forum plan was to the intended outcomes?
- How well did children feel media relations were handled? Did they feel well prepared and supported?
- How well did children feel any dialogue sessions with senior ministers or other adults were organized and facilitated?
- Did they feel well prepared and supported?
- What do children feel they gained from participation in the forum?

Advocacy

- How successful were you in publicizing the event?
- How far were you successful in your specific advocacy objectives (especially influencing the attitudes and actions of senior policy-makers)?
- How satisfied are children with the advocacy activities surrounding the forum?

Longer-term

- How effective is the follow-up support for children's participation?
- How, and how effectively, have participants shared their experiences with their peers?
- What impacts has children's participation in the forum had on children's participation in communities, in partner organizations, children's situation in their home communities? – Look at both adults' attitudes and children's attitudes, and to look at both children who participated in the forum and children who did not

Section D.8 gives suggestions on processes for monitoring and evaluation.

Lessons learned

Children's participation is, for most organizations, a very new area in which everyone is still learning. From the experiences of children and adults, we should be able to identify useful lessons learned that will help us organize next year's Voices of Children process as well as helping others who are planning similar events. Take care to document any lessons you have learned, big or small.

B.8 Seize the opportunities

Voices of Children will present many opportunities for empowerment and for changing attitudes, and these opportunities should be built on.

- When you seek informed consent for children's participation in the forum, you will have to inform the parents and children about the forum and about the reasons children are involved. Even if the parents or children do not give their consent, use this as an opportunity to educate them about trafficking, about participation, and about the work of SC UK, ILO-IPEC and our partners.
- Children who hear about children's involvement in the forum will probably be surprised and interested. Plan ahead how you can provide them with more information, encourage debate and action – their interest will not last long unless you build on it.
- Media coverage or other discussion of the forums will reach parents, teachers and other decision-makers. Once again, provide them with information and encourage discussion.
- The children's outputs in the national forums will certainly be relevant to our programme work. Start discussing programming approaches in the light of the Agenda for Action, and encourage partners to do the same.

B.9 Follow-up

Children participating in consultations, research and other adult-led activities frequently complain about the lack of follow-up. The national forums should be part of a process: towards the Mekong Children's Forum, towards the next forums, and, in the meantime, towards greater empowerment of children and involvement of children in our programming.

- The children who participate will have a lot to share with their peers that is inspirational and educational. They should be encouraged and supported to do this soon after the forum.
- Let children know what impact the forum has had: changes in programming approaches, media coverage, responses from decision-makers and opinion-formers. In particular, let them know what happens in the COMMIT process – send them copies of the outputs of the COMMIT/SOM meetings and highlight indications that the children's advocacy (and ours) has been effective.
- Support implementation of any actions (child-led, adult-led or joint) proposed by the children in their Agenda for Action.
- Keep the participants' contact details for follow-up evaluation.
- Overall, try to keep up (two-way) contact between Voices of Children and the participating children and their peers. Let them know we are still interested in them, and what they have to say, after the forums.

B.10 Celebrate!

The national forum, and any preparatory or follow-up activities with children should be fun.

- Make sure the agenda leaves lots of times for games, relaxation and fun. Children know how to make serious activities fun, and to produce valuable, substantial work through playful activities.
- Celebrate achievements, don't focus on what wasn't achieved.
- Make sure the agenda does not ask too much of children. Sessions should be able to end on time.
- Always show the children that their participation is appreciated.
- Don't let the forum end without at least a small celebratory party.

A role for over-18s?

Many children we have worked with in the past are now young adults, including several who were trafficked as children and have gone through rescue and reintegration programs. They cannot be at the forum as participants, but they may have very important contributions to make, especially if they have experience of participation themselves; for example, they might make good facilitators, they can brief children about what they can expect at the forums; they can help you to plan the forums; they can be resources and advisers for the children (but they should not actually be part of decision-making).

You should be as careful with checking the background and references of over-18s as you are with other adults involved in the forums.

The organizers of the forums are responsible for protecting the health, safety and emotional and moral well-being of all children who we invite to participate, from the moment that they leave their parents or guardians to join an activity related to Voices of Children.

This duty of care has several aspects:

- protection from physical harm and ill-health;
- protection from emotional and psychological harm;
- protection from abuse (violence, verbal, emotional and/or sexual) and exploitation;
- protection from discrimination by adults or other children;
- protection of other rights, such as education and leisure time.

Explain precautions to the children

The children may find some of the precautions for child protection restrictive and over-careful. Discuss them with the children and tell them why we are being so careful: for their own protection and because we have made a promise to their parents or guardians, and because SC UK, ILO-IPEC and the chaperones are legally responsible for the children's safety.

Avoid making the precautions (like adult accompaniment) seem oppressive, and if the children have alternative suggestions that do not add risk, you may adopt these instead.

Guidelines on Child Protection



C.1 Code of Practice on Protection

- At least one responsible adult should know the whereabouts of each child at all times;
- Every child will be covered by travel, medical, personal accident and liability insurance while participating in, and traveling to and from, Voices of Children forums.
- The organizers will make every effort to ensure the child receives appropriate assistance in the event of medical or other emergencies.
- The organizers will make every effort to ensure that children are not at risk while under their responsibility, including by the presence of anyone invited to the forums.

C.2 Medical support

(from So You Want to Consult with Children)

- Prior to departure, each accompanying adult (chaperone) should get written permission from the child's legal guardians to act on their behalf in case of medical emergency. It is important to ensure that all children have access to medical services and medical care, as required. This will involve:
- Ensuring that all children have full insurance coverage prior to departure.
- A nurse/doctor being available on-site or on-call during the consultation or meeting
- A room being set aside where young participants can rest if they are feeling ill
- Basic medical supplies or a first aid kit being available on-site
- All information regarding participants information.

C.3 Insurance

Health, travel, personal accident and liability insurance should be provided to cover each of the children participating in the forum. Details should be available before the informed consent of parents/guardians is sought, and should be explained to the parents/guardians. The organizers should arrange this insurance. Details should be held centrally at the forum venue and copies provided for the chaperones before departure.

C.4 Contingency planning for child protection

At a minimum, have plans and procedures in place that everyone involved – children and adults – understands, for the following cases:

- A child experiences emotional or psychological difficulties during (or as a result of) the forum – Do any of the chaperones, organizers or facilitators have experience in psycho-social counseling techniques? Is there a professional counselor who can be called in, and are they available during the forum?
- A conflict develops among the children or adults participating – Who will break up a physical fight? Should those involved be excluded from the forum? This can be addressed to some extent in the ground rules you agree with the children at the start of the forum (see D.5.1 below);
- There is a complaint about inappropriate behaviour by an adult or another child towards a child or adult – Who will investigate? How will you protect their identity? What steps will you take?

- A child goes missing – Where should you look for them first? Who will stay with the other children? How can the children contact you? Do all the children have sufficient information and money to contact you or the police?
- There is a fire at the hotel or forum venue – Where should children gather? Who has a register of all the children?
- A child or adult reports that some property has been stolen – Who should investigate? When should you call the police?
- A medical problem – Does anyone know first aid? Who will accompany the person to the doctor or hospital, and how will the medical fees be paid?

C.5 Background checks

Potentially abusive people must never be put in a position where they can harm children. Make sure that the adults (including young people) who will come into direct contact with the children does not pose a threat to children (the participating children should also not pose such a threat). Unless you are very confident about them, conduct a confidential background check on each person invited to the forum. Follow up references, ask children who have had contact with the person, ask other organizations who may have worked with the person.

It is important to let any candidates know in advance that you will be carrying out confidential background research on them, and that they will not be able to ask you who you have spoken to or what specific individuals have told you. Also, if you hear bad reports about a candidate, you should give the candidate a chance to defend themselves. If you are certain that they have previously abused or exploited children, you should recommend that they seek appropriate health may need to alert relevant authorities if you believe they pose a continued threat to children.

C.6 Chaperones³

It is essential that children participating in the forums feel secure and are properly looked after. This means all children under the age of 18 years and not just those who may be participating in a meeting for the first time or travelling outside of their local area for the first time.

Every child attending the forum should be attached to an adult chaperone who is responsible for the child's safety and well-being throughout the forum. In order to carry out their duties well, each chaperone should be responsible for no more than four or five children. If possible, the chaperone should pick the child up from their parents or guardians and be responsible for the child until they are safely returned to the parents or guardians.

The chaperones should ideally be someone who knows the child, who speaks the same language and with whom the child has a trusting relationship. Gender balance should also be considered – women should accompany girl participants (unless otherwise agreed upon with the child's parents/guardians).

Each chaperone, the children who will be in their care and the children's parents or guardians should have a chance to get to know each other as early as possible before the forum. Each child (and their parents and guardians) should be comfortable with the chaperone. Equally, the chaperone should be comfortable accompanying the child and confident that they will be able to fulfil their duties protecting the child (that is, confident that the child will not try to run away, harm themselves, or act inappropriately).

See Part F for a checklist of steps you should follow in introducing chaperones to children and parents and making arrangements for picking up and dropping off children.

- A letter should be sent to chaperones explaining their duties, responsibilities and the rules of conduct they should follow while children are in their care. A model letter to chaperones is provided in Annex 2.
- While they are fulfilling their duties around the forum, chaperones are representatives – and employees – of SC UK and/or the ILO. Their tasks, the extents and limits of their responsibilities, and the support they can and cannot expect from SC UK and/or ILO-IPEC should be agreed in writing.

³ Although the word "chaperone" in English refers specifically to a female accompanying adult, it is used here as a general term for both genders.

Expected responsibilities of the accompanying adult include:

- Facilitating the child(ren)'s travel to the meeting and back home, which will include transport to the airport, providing support at customs, check-in, boarding the plane etc.
- Facilitating the movement of the child(ren) from one place to another during the time of the meeting.
- Being aware of the child(ren)'s whereabouts at all times.
- Providing information, advice and support to the children when needed.
- Providing encouragement and support for the children's participation in the meeting.
- Ensuring that the children are able to communicate with other groups of children through interpreters and the extra provision of translation support, whenever possible.
- Ensuring that the children can relax and participate in the discussions.
- Being aware of the physical and emotional needs of the child(ren) in your care and assisting in meeting these needs as appropriate.
- Providing any other physical and emotional support that the children might need. This should include the accompanying adult having the child(ren)'s medical and emergency information in their possession at all times, with written permission from the child(ren)'s guardians to act on their behalf for medical emergencies.
- Informing the meeting organisers of any difficulties that the children under their care may be experiencing.
- Offering opportunities, and providing support for, de-briefing, feedback with their peer group and follow up activities once the children have returned home.
(the above from So You Want to Consult with Children)
- Keeping the children out of situations in which they may be abducted, tricked or lured away, for the purposes of work, exploitation or abuse.
- Being vigilant for indications that the child may be planning to run away, and preventing them from doing so.

- Like all adults in the forum, the chaperone must not try to influence the children's discussions and decisions.
- In most cases, the chaperones will be identified by the partner organizations which have contact with the children who will come to the forum. However, the organizers are responsible for the performance of the chaperones. The chaperones should be reliable and competent to handle their responsibility. If possible, children should be involved in selecting the chaperones. If a child is not comfortable with the selected chaperone, they should not be accompanied by them.
- If the organizers decide to relieve a chaperone of their duties to protect a child's best interests, they should inform children and must select, with children, other reliable adults who can take over the responsibilities of the chaperone.
- One child – one adult. As soon as any child leaves the main forum space, that child should be under the responsibility of one specific adult at any given time. If responsibility for the child passes from one adult to another (for example from one of the forum organizers to a chaperone), both adults and the child must be made aware of it. If there is a lack of clarity about who is responsible for a child, several minutes or even hours could pass before anyone notices that the child is missing.

Suggested code of conduct

It is important for the accompanying adults/facilitators in contact with children to:

- Be aware of situations which may present risks and manage these;
- Ensure that a culture of openness exists to enable any issues or concerns to be raised and discussed;
- Ensure that a sense of accountability exists between staff so that poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour does not go unchallenged.

In general it is inappropriate to:

- Spend excessive time alone with children away from others;
- Take children to places where they will be alone with the chaperone/facilitator.

The accompanying adult/facilitator must never:

- Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children;
- Develop physical/sexual relationships with children;
- Develop relationships with children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive;
- Act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse.

The accompanying adult/facilitator must avoid actions or behaviour that could be construed as poor practice or potentially abusive. For example, they should never:

- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive.
- Behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative.
- Have a child/children with whom they are working to stay overnight in the adult's room.
- Do things for children of a personal nature that they can do for themselves.
- Condone, or participate in, behaviour of children which is illegal, unsafe and abusive.
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse.
- Discriminate against, show differential treatment, or favour particular child(ren) to the exclusion of others.

Based on So You Want to Consult with Children, pp. 66–67

C.7 Be alert to children

During the forum, facilitators and chaperones should be alert for signs that a child is experiencing distress. Discuss it with their chaperone (unless you suspect that the chaperone may be part of the problem). Always try to deal with such cases sensitively and in a way that does not draw attention to the child.

C.7 Reasonable burden

While children should be encouraged to participate actively and in a variety of ways (including planning and documenting), be careful that individuals are not given too much responsibility, even if they volunteer for it. The first priority is that they participate in the discussions and decision-making at the heart of the forum. They must also have enough time to relax.

Other elements of good practice in child protection

- Children and young people should also be briefed about child protection policy.
- In addition to chaperones, focal persons should be assigned by the forum organizers. Each focal person should have designated responsibility for security and support needs either during the meeting and/or in the evenings at any accommodation venues.
- Focal persons must ensure that the children and young people know the name(s) of the person(s) they can report any concerns to.
- Children should be made aware that they are also free to contact another designated NGO representative or conference/meeting representative should they have any questions or if their chaperone is not available or appropriate.
- A central database should be set up by the forum organizers with all details of young delegates (contact details during the meeting, of the chaperone, of the parent or legal guardian). Registration forms for young delegates attending meetings should be designed to gather all the information necessary to ensure child protection. The contents of the forms and the database should be treated as strictly confidential by the forum organizers.
- An 'emergency number card' should be provided to each young delegate with key numbers /addresses (focal points, doctors, hotel etc.).

Adapted from: So You Want to Consult with Children? pp. 68–69.

C.9 Problem reporting

- Unfortunately, there may be problems that children require help with. Children need to know that their complaints will be taken seriously and acted on appropriately. They also need to know that the organizers welcome their complaints and that the children will be protected from any negative repercussions. In particular, confidentiality will be respected.
- The organizers should select one or two focal points for dealing with complaints. Any adult who receives a complaint should quickly communicate it directly to one of these focal points (unless the child has specifically asked the adult not to); the adult receiving the complaint should never try to address a problem of a sensitive nature independently.
- Any action to be taken should be discussed first with the child, including who else to discuss the problem with. The child's best interests should always be the first priority in responding to any problem. In some cases, it may be necessary to breach confidentiality or act against the child's will in order to protect the child's best interests, but this should always be given very careful consideration.
- The identity of the child making a complaint should not be shared except with the focal points, unless it is absolutely necessary or the child wishes it.
- If it is necessary to communicate with the child again about the complaint, it should be done in a way that draws as little attention as possible.

Planning the National Children's Forums

D

D.1 Where and When?

D:1.1 Scheduling the national forums

The dates of the national forum should not be shortly before or during national school exams. Please also let us know as soon as possible if the proposed dates for the Mekong Children's Forum (10–16 October 2004) coincides with national examinations.

D:1.2 Accommodation for children and chaperones

Choose accommodation that is both safe and comfortable for the children. They may find very formal hotels boring and even intimidating. On the other hand, the accommodation should be comfortable and children should be able to have privacy. Some hotels may have more experience with accommodating large parties of children and have appropriate facilities.

- Try to accommodate all of the children in one place to simplify the logistics and to give children a chance to socialize with new friends in their spare time.
- If children are going to share rooms, give them a choice in who they share with and pay attention to potential cultural or personal conflicts.
- Do not put boys and girls together in the same room.
- Never have adults and children sleeping in the same room.

Make sure it is easy to get from the accommodation to the forum venue. Consider providing transport between the accommodation and the venue, and make sure children are accompanied when they go between the two places.

D:1.2 The forum venue

You should find somewhere comfortable and safe for the national forum to take place. In considering potential venues, take into account the following:

- The forum sessions should be energetic and stimulating, with a range of activities that get children out of their seats. Therefore the space should be suitable for games, group work, art, drama etc. Ideally, it should have a clean floor so children can do some activities sitting on the floor (everyone sitting on the floor in a circle is a good setting to promote active, informal, democratic discussion). Avoid venues with tables and chairs fixed in place, unless there is a large empty space that children can move to.
- Artwork that children want to share should be posted on the walls, so make sure you can put pins in the wall and/or you are allowed to put sticky tape on the walls.
- Consider media events and any dialogues between children and senior – will you use the same forum space? Will the children be able to set up exhibitions? Where will the officials sit? Where will journalists sit and set up their cameras? Will there be enough room for their lights and sound equipment to see any presentations and drama by the children?

Tip! Avoid spaces where there is a lot of background noise – especially noisy air-conditioning units. As well as being tiring to listen to, it makes everyone talk louder, so groupwork becomes more difficult; simultaneous translation will suffer and will become more distracting for everyone else. The quality of audio recordings you make will be greatly reduced, so you will miss out on important advocacy and documentation opportunities.

D.2 Informing children about the forums

Information related to the forum should be disseminated to children as early as possible. In deciding what information to send, you should think of what children will need to know in order to decide whether they wish to participate in the forum, prepare themselves for the forum and have some discussion with their peers on the issue of trafficking (including responses and the national legal/policy framework).

Information should be in a child-friendly format (see Section B.5. above), but copies of all relevant documents should be sent in their full (translated) versions as well.

Below are some suggested minimum checklists of topics that children should receive information about:

Before the forum (at least a few days before, but as early as possible):

- Introduction to TICW and SC UK and overview of the Voices of Children initiative, including the Mekong Children's Forum and the need to select representatives
- Outline agenda, purpose and objectives of the national forum
- Introduction to the COMMIT process
- TICW and SC UK's expectations and hopes for children's participation in the Voices of Children initiative
- Introduction to trafficking: definition, facts and statistics
- What other children have told us about trafficking, labour migration etc. and how children have participated in definition, action, policy-making and/or research related to trafficking in children
- Introduction to national policy/legal framework on trafficking, relevant decision-making structures, and other actors who might be able to assist and support children's agenda on trafficking
- Introduction to advocacy (including using the media)
- The roles and responsibilities of children in the forums (including feedback to children who do not attend)
- What guidance is being given to adult observers and facilitators in the forums on how to behave and how to work with children

Shortly before leaving to attend the forum:

- Message of welcome and thanks from TICW and SC UK
- Logistical information about the national forum
- Forum agenda
- Details of the Mekong Children's Forum
- Guidelines for selecting delegates to the Mekong Children's Forum
- The support that TICW, SC UK and partners can give children for activities they might plan during the forum (and what cannot be supported)
- Other information if requested by the children.

After the forum:

- Message of thanks
- Advice on how to share their experiences at the forum with other children, families, communities, etc.
- Forum documentation
- Information about the impacts of the forum (media coverage, comments from senior officials and ministers, comments from others, incorporation of children's recommendations into policies and programming; follow-up by children; follow-up by SC UK, ILO-IPEC and partners) (ongoing)

At the sub-regional level, Caspar Trimmer (caspar@loxinfo.co.th) is preparing in English some background information for participating children. You may want to translate and adapt this (with country-specific information) as part of your present to children.

D.3 Inviting children to the forums

D:3.1 Selecting children

Some basic criteria for the selection of national forum participants should include:

- The selected children should have experience and knowledge to make a valuable contribution on the subject of human trafficking and responses to it;
- The selected children should have connections with a wider peer group of children whose opinions and experience they are familiar – for example through children’s clubs, organizations and networks;
- You should try to ensure fair representation along these lines:
 - A mix of ages between 10 and 17 years;
 - Gender mix;
 - Some children with experience of trafficking;
 - Some working children;
 - Some out-of-school children;
 - Some children with little or no experience of participating in such forums;
 - A mix of children from different areas/provinces.
- Children who have not been victims of trafficking and are not considered at high risk, but currently participate in SC UK or ILO-IPEC anti-trafficking work can be included, but should constitute no more than half of the participating children.

Beyond these criteria, try to make sure that the selection reflects the patterns of vulnerability to trafficking in your country. For example, if children of one or more ethnic minorities or stateless children are especially vulnerable to trafficking, try to ensure that they are represented; if children from remote rural areas are more vulnerable to trafficking than urban children, try to make sure that a substantial number of participants are from remote rural areas.

- Whatever method you use for selecting individual children, it should be fair and transparent (that is, all the children concerned – those selected and those not selected – should know about the forum and should have the selection process explained to them; children’s comments on the selection should be taken into account). The more children are involved in the selection process, and the more they understand, the less chance there will be of envy and resentment towards the children who are eventually selected as forum participants.
- Once children have been selected, they should be encouraged and supported to ask as many of their peers as possible about their experiences and what messages they want to send to the national forum. The selected children should also be supported to share with these other children the outcomes of the national forum and to propose follow-up action.

D:3.2 Informed consent

Children and their parents and guardians must be asked for their consent before children become involved. They must understand exactly what Voices of Children is, what activities (including travel) it will involve, what publicity it is likely to attract, what risks might be involved, and how the participating children will be supported and protected.

The parents or legal guardians of children you offer the chance to participate in the National Forums should complete and sign a Consent Form based on the model given in Annex 1.

Please note that the consent form hands responsibility for the child to the chaperone, not to SC UK or ILO-IPEC. This does not reduce our own duty of care towards the children, but it means that the chaperone’s decision overrules our own decision (unless it is clearly against the best interests of the child). This responsibility must be explained to the chaperones in writing.

Part F gives a set of recommended steps you should follow in approaching children about the forum, identifying chaperones for the children, obtaining parents’/guardians’ informed consent, and picking up and dropping off the children.

- If the arrangements or activities for the forums change in a way that might affect whether children or their parents and guardians would want to give consent, they should be informed and their consent sought again.
- Children and/or their parents and guardians must understand that they are free to withdraw their consent at any time. This message should be repeated to the children at the start of the forum. This includes consent to be accompanied by their current chaperone (in which case they should be attached to another appropriate chaperone, and this chaperone or one of the organizers should accompany them back to their parents at the end of the forum).

- For obtaining children's informed consent for activities, media contact etc. during the forum, written consent may not be appropriate or necessary. Younger or less confident children may feel uncomfortable saying "no", so you could develop with them (individually or as a group) alternative methods, such as issuing them with red, green and orange green cards (red for "no", orange for "maybe – I need to know more", and green for "I give my consent").
- If children produce artwork or text that you think might be used in documentation of the forum, in exhibitions or in later publications, the children who produced them should be asked, individually and privately, whether and how it can be used, and what information about themselves should be attached to it. Details of the conditions for use should, if possible, be written on the back of the original artwork or text and distributed with any copies.
- All the signed informed consent forms should be brought to the forum and kept centrally for reference and in case a child needs medical treatment (the consent forms include consent for the chaperone to act on behalf of the child in medical emergencies).

Even with the most careful precautions to protect children during the forum, it is still possible that they will be at risk as a result of their participation before and after the forum:

- Interest groups in the community (such as traffickers, businesspeople, particular ethnic groups, police or local leaders) may not like the publicity that Voices of Children does (or they believe might) bring them;
- other children may be envious; it might lead to the child being branded as a victim, as vulnerable, as a sex worker, as a "charity case", and even abuse and exploitation.

During this time, their protection is the responsibility of their parents or guardians; however, it is essential that children and their parents or legal are aware of these risks and prepared for them before they give consent.

D.4 Adult involvement

Adults will be present at the national forums in a variety of roles. This section looks at some general guidelines that adults attending the forum should follow, and then gives some specific guidance on the roles and responsibilities of the various adults and how they can be prepared for attending the forums. Separate guidelines on media contact are given in Part E. Some general rules should be observed:

- Do not allow anyone into the forum sessions who does not need to be there – this is important for child protection (the more outsiders, the harder to monitor) and to help the children participate without pressure or distractions.
- Check references and backgrounds of adults and children and young people who are invited to the forums. See Section C.4.

D:4.1 For all adults

- All adults who come to the Voices of Children forums should be sent invitation letters beforehand that let them know the role of adults in Voices of Children (see Section B.2). Adults should remember:
 - Do not participate in activities or give opinions unless asked to;
 - Be prepared to have your advice ignored – it is the children's choice;
 - Be careful that advice does not sound like a command, through your words ("I think that ...", "In my experience ..."), through your tone of voice, and through your body language;
 - Respect the children's right to privacy; do not share personal information about them, especially if children have asked you not to;
 - All children should be treated with equal respect for their human dignity, without discrimination or favouritism;
 - Listen to what the children say without interrupting them;
 - Explain your opinions and decisions to children;
 - Avoid jargon; keep what you say clear and non-technical;
 - When you are not interacting directly with the children, try to be as inconspicuous as possible;
 - Avoid spending time alone with children unless the child's chaperone and/or the forum organizers know where, why and for how long, and give their approval.
 - Do not act in an inappropriate manner with children or attempt to form inappropriate relations with them;
- Before entering the forum sessions, adults should be briefed on the forum ground rules (see Section D.5.1).
- Introduce adults properly when they arrive so children know who they are and why they are there.

D:4.2 Chaperones

Every child attending the forum should be attached to an adult chaperone who is responsible for the child's safety and well-being throughout the forum. See Section C.5.

D:4.3 Facilitators/activity leaders

Facilitators play an important role in any meeting, helping the participants to achieve their objectives in the most effective ways. Facilitating a meeting for children is harder work and requires different skills. A facilitator in the national forums will need to be able to build a strong rapport with, and gain the trust of, children, and:

- Plan the forum
- Monitor and try to maintain energy levels, which are likely to be less predictable than for adults
- Identify, introduce, oversee and support appropriate activities for children, including games, art, theatre
- Maintain an enabling environment and a fun atmosphere
- Provide information in a child-friendly format
- Judge whether activities and information are at an appropriate level for the children and understood by them
- Try to generate communication and collaboration within a very diverse group.

When identifying facilitators for the national forums, try to find people who are experienced in facilitating for children (but find out what you can about how children have responded to them in the past). If you cannot, try to organize training for them. The facilitators you pick should:

- be capable of understanding and communicating on all the issues that will be discussed in the national forums;
- understand and respect the ethical guidelines for working with children;
- be able to establish a good rapport with children and to communicate with children as equals.

D:4.4 Interpreters

Working as an interpreter in a children's meeting is hard work but usually wonderfully rewarding. Good child-friendly interpreters often develop an excellent rapport with the children with whom they are working. Interpreters are crucial to making it possible for children to communicate and therefore to the success of the event. – So You Want to Consult with Children?

As mentioned above, you should try to provide opportunities for children to participate even if they do not speak the language of the forum.

- If interpreters are needed for some child participants in the national forums, they should:
 - be able to understand and speak the language of the meeting and the target child's language well enough to translate quickly and accurately
 - be capable of communicating complicated ideas with children in a way that children understand
 - have a chance to get to know the children before the forum, if they do not know them already
 - receive all information that the children receive
 - be provided with explanations of technical terms that may be unfamiliar, if they are not familiar with the issue of trafficking or with development work
 - be briefed on child protection policies and children's participation guidelines.
- Interpreters must translate every word said by the child to the group, or by the group to the individual child, without correcting it or deciding what is "necessary" and what is not. When interpreting the child's words, the interpreter should use the first person "I," and not "he/she says that ..."
- The interpreter should be ready to interpret for the child even in the evenings, in case the child needs to communicate about something, and especially if the child is the only one speaking a particular language in the forum.
- If a child with an interpreter participates in the meeting, everyone must agree to slow the pace of discussions to give the interpreter time to do their work. The facilitator should enforce this, and make sure the interpreter has time to rest.
- The facilitator should make sure a child with an interpreter is never made to feel that they are a burden on the other children.

D.5 The forum programme

The forum programme should be designed to help children achieve the forum objectives in the best way, while respecting their rights.

The programme should leave enough room for fun activities such as drama, artwork and games; these have proved popular and useful with children as ways of expressing themselves. However, not every objective is best achieved through non-verbal activities. Where possible, children should be given a choice of how they want to express themselves in a particular activity, but should be advised if a certain method might be more effective (for example, the Agenda for Action will need to be verbal; ministers and officials may prefer verbal messages; artwork and theatre can send strong, simple emotional messages, but are very open to misinterpretation – children should be encouraged to give a short explanation of what a picture or drama is supposed to mean. In the case of artwork, this explanation should be written on the back and should be included when the picture is used.

- Make sure that you have the necessary materials, space and other resources to allow children to use creative methods to express themselves.
- Children and “Over-18s” (see below) can help to suggest appropriate activities.

Allow enough time for children to complete all of the tasks and activities in the forum in a satisfactory and meaningful way. Overrunning sessions should be avoided.

Try to involve children or young people in designing the programme. If this is not possible before the forum starts, explain why you have planned the programme in the way you have and, ideally, leave some flexibility in the agenda for the children to make changes to it.

D:5.1 Setting ground rules

The forums will go more smoothly, and there will be less conflict, if everyone agrees to a set of ground rules at the start. These rules should be followed by all children and all adults at all times during the forum.

Children should be very much involved in defining the rules, and a short session should be set aside for it on Day 1 of the forum. You could present list of suggested rules first and ask the children to discuss it and change or add to it.

Some suggested ground rules:

- Everyone has a right to privacy which should be respected at all times (you may need to define this in more detail with the children).
- We want to hear everyone. Give everyone else a chance to speak. Don't talk too long. Only the chair of a session can interrupt someone.
- Diversity makes the forum richer. Every child and adult, whatever their age, gender, ethnic/cultural/religious background, should treat each other with the same respect in the way they speak and act, whether in front of their face or behind their back,
- All religious and cultural practices should be respected, unless they lead to discrimination
- We are lucky to hear from people who speak different languages or have disabilities. Everyone speak slowly and clearly so that these friends can join in.
- Everyone should be ready to start on time, so we can finish on time.
- If activities run over time, everyone should have a say in what to do.
- If you cannot attend a session, let the organizers know.
- There's work to do – everyone should pull their weight.
- Everyone should have time to rest and have fun. No-one should be given too much work.
- No-one should use physical or verbal violence or any other inappropriate behaviour (which will need to be defined) towards anyone else.

It is also important for everyone to agree how the rules should be enforced, and who is responsible for enforcing them (for both children and adults). Physical punishments cannot be used, and excluding children from sessions should only be used as a last resort.

D:5.2 Handing over responsibility to children

Children may be willing to chair and even facilitate some sessions. If this is the case, facilitators should take time to brief the chairs and facilitators about the aims and process for the session. Unless the session is to be children-only, a facilitator should be present to support the child chairperson or child facilitator. Make sure children understand that as facilitators and chairpersons, they will not really be able to participate in that session.

D:5.3 Rest and relaxation

Arrange appropriate sightseeing and shopping trips for the children to relax and enjoy themselves.

Remember that there will be extra child protection concerns during these trips – make sure there are enough chaperones and that they know where children are at all times, and that children have enough information and money to get back to the hotel or contact the police if they get lost. Every child should carry an address card with useful telephone numbers and addresses.

D:5.4 Going out with a bang!

Set aside some time and resources for a short party at the end of the forum. It does not have to be spectacular, just an opportunity to celebrate what they have achieved and say goodbye.

A Suggestion: “Communities”

So You Want to Consult with Children suggests forming small “community groups” of children during meetings and consultations. With large numbers of children coming from different backgrounds and areas, this approach seems very appropriate to the Voices of Children forums.

Such “communities” of around 10 children each can help to ensure that boys and girls, children from different areas and backgrounds, children of different ages, and children with different experiences support each other and hear each other’s points of view. The communities can also be a useful basis for group activities, games, nominating children to attend monitoring meetings, and for responsibilities such as documenting.

D.6 Preparing for the Mekong Children’s Forum

A part of the national forum should be set aside for helping children prepare for the Mekong Children’s Forum.

D:6.1 Selecting delegates

During the national forums, children should choose three to four delegates who will represent them in the Mekong Children’s Forum. While you may be able to stipulate some basic criteria (such as those mentioned in Section B.4 above), children should be as free as possible to elect their own chosen representatives. Agree with children a set of selection criteria before the election process to ensure a truly representative delegation.

At the start of the selection process, before asking children to volunteer as potential delegates, the role and responsibilities of the delegates should be made clear.

In a general sense, the delegates to the Mekong Children’s Forum should try to make sure their national peers’ views and aspirations are heard. The delegates will need to present messages and outputs from national forum (see below).

- We suggests that children should be told about the election at the start of the forum (and in the information they receive before it), but the election should take place later in the forum. This will give children a chance to consider whether they want to volunteer as candidates, and will give other children a chance to get to know them.
- If a child is interested in being a delegate to the Mekong Children’s Forum, you should help them to contact their parents or guardians by telephone in order to discuss it.
- For each delegate, an alternate should be chosen who can go to the Mekong Children’s Forum if the original delegate is unable to for some reason.

D:6.2 Preparing inputs

The Mekong Children's Forum will largely build on the discussions and outcomes of the national children's forums. Any documentation of the national forums in English should be shared with delegates from other countries before the Mekong Children's Forum.

Country delegations should be able to give a presentation on their national forum, including the groups of children who attended, their dialogues with senior officials, the experiences of children in their country, their agenda for action and any related advocacy activities and follow-up, messages from the national forum to the Mekong Children's Forum, etc.

Details of the agenda for the Mekong Children's Forum will be circulated during September, but it is certain that there will be space for children to set up small exhibitions on their national forums. If possible, time should be made in the national forums to plan these presentations and exhibitions so that all the children can participate in deciding how the delegates present the national forums.

An important part of the Mekong Children's Forum will be sharing the experiences of children in relation to trafficking. Delegates will share their own experiences, but should also be able to talk more generally about the experiences of children in their country or community in relation to trafficking. It may be the experiences of children in the forum, of children who are not able to attend, or documented experiences of other children in the media, official documents or other reports and meetings (this is something you should research and present to the children).

D:6.3 Administrative issues

After the national forum, start applying for passports and travel clearance (if necessary) for the child delegates, their alternates as well as the chaperone and interpreter(s) (see below). ILO-IPEC and SC UK SEAPRO will be able to advise about obtaining visas for Thailand. Children and adults have been unable to attend international meetings because of being denied visas or permission to travel, so start this process as early as possible.

D:6.4 Selection of chaperones and interpreters

Every country will need to identify one chaperone to accompany the delegation to the Mekong Children's Forum. Their responsibilities will be similar to those of the chaperones in the national forums, but they should speak and understand English fluently as they will almost certainly need to act as interpreters for children at certain points. The children will also need an English-language interpreter for every language represented in the delegation. If the children's delegation includes both girls and boys, try to identify chaperones and interpreters of different genders.

D.7 Dialogue with senior officials and ministers

Some countries are planning to invite senior officials and/or ministers involved in the COMMIT process to the national forums. This will give children a chance to influence key policy-makers early on in the COMMIT process; it will also give the ministers and officials a chance to see just how capable and resourceful children can be.

A special session of the forum should be allocated for this dialogue. Try to schedule the dialogue towards the end of the forum so children have a chance to prepare what they want to say.

During the dialogue, a strong chairperson will be needed who can make sure the ministers and officials listen attentively, speak slowly and clearly, and otherwise behave respectfully towards the children – and ensure that the children do the same. The chairperson could be a child, but facilitators and/or organizers should be ready to step in if the ministers or officials are not responding to the child chairperson.

- It may be better to exclude the media from the dialogue so they are not a distraction for the children (or, more importantly, for the ministers and senior officials).

D.8 Hiring a photographer and videographer

It is recommended that to protect children's right to privacy, press photographers and videographers should not be allowed in the forums. Instead, you should hire a photographer and, if possible, videographer who can produce professional-standard work. They will produce photographs and video for documentation and for release to the media. These photos and video should try to portray different aspects of the forum, emphasizing the children's active participation. Children may also want to incorporate photographs or video into their activities, or into their presentations to ministers and senior officials or the Mekong Children's Forum.

No photographs or video should be released publicly in which an individual child can be identified. If necessary, blur or block out children's faces before releasing photographs or videos. However, the photographer and videographer should be encouraged to find creative ways to photograph or video the children without them being identifiable.

If media request photographs of individual children (for example to accompany an interview with an individual), the child's face must, of course, not be identifiable.

Any photographs or video should be approved by the children concerned before they are used or released.

See the media guidelines in Part E for more information.

D.9 Suggestions for monitoring and evaluation

During the forum, children and adults can help informal monitoring by short meetings after the last session of the day. Children should be encouraged to take turns attending these monitoring meetings.

When children are asked their expectations at the beginning of the forum, they could also be asked how they will know whether their expectations have been met. These indicators could then be the basis for evaluation later and should be built into any evaluation forms.

Evaluation forms should probably be anonymous, and the results should be shared with the participants before they leave, if possible. Children should also have a chance for a child-led plenary discussion to evaluate the meeting and identify some lessons learned/suggestions for future forums.

Monitoring and evaluation of follow-up and longer-term impacts should be discussed with children and organized with partner organizations who have access to the participating children.

D.10 Documentation

Children should be involved in documenting the national forums, because this will be how their work is recorded and shared over the long term. At the very least, children should have the chance to comment on drafts of the forum documentation. However, they could become more deeply involved.

- If literacy levels are reasonably high, children could make their own documents of the sessions. If they wish to participate in this way, individual children should only be responsible for documentation for a short time. Allow a little time at the end of each activity for the documenters to fill in any gaps and for the forum to comment on the documentation.
- Children will certainly enjoy using a video camera and/or sound-recording equipment to document activities, but they will need some training and support.
- Documentation duties should be voluntary and should interfere as little as possible with children's ability to participate. For some sessions and activities, children may prefer to have an adult doing the documentation.
- Make sure children with low literacy have some other useful way they can contribute instead of documentation.

Tip! If you are making an audio or audio-visual document, check that the microphone is picking up the right sounds, not the voices of translators or loud background noise.

D:10.1 The final documents

To maximize the advocacy and learning opportunities presented by the forums, a range of documents will should be produced, each with a different focus. One document should certainly present the children's outputs – the agenda for action, the advocacy messages, their creative work, etc. Documentation of this sort could include a short brochure, a set of posters, a short film.

There should be comprehensive document of the process, including information about the materials sent to the children and with consent forums, guidelines sent to children and adults etc. as appendices (these will be useful in organizing future events with children). Above all, consider what you want to achieve through the documentation, and the audiences who can help you achieve those aims, and use this as the basis for deciding what kinds of documents to produce.

- Documentation of the forums should celebrate children's energy and creativity, as well as the fun they had. Artwork, photographs and quotations will make a more readable and compelling document.
- Children's outputs should always be put in context – every document that includes children's outputs should give at least a very brief description of the process.
- See the Media and Publicity Guidelines (Part E) for guidance on informed consent and protecting privacy in relation to any published documentation.

D.11 Share your experiences

Your experiences with implementing these guidelines in the national forums will be invaluable for other countries holding their forums after you, and for the final design of the Mekong Children's Forum. Let us know what worked well (and not so well). Tell us your suggestions. Let us make this a real learning experience.

Media and Publicity Guidelines

E

Media, publicity and publications can play an extremely important role in achieving the objectives of the Voices of Children forums and taking key messages to a wider audience. To make sure the children's voices are heard far and wide, you should try to attract as much attention from the mainstream media as possible. With proper planning and support, it should be possible to generate media coverage that is positive, ethical, respectful and exciting for the children, and to create documents and materials that are compelling, educational and ethical and further our – and the children's – advocacy goals.

E.1 Core principles

These principles should always be followed in arranging and managing all publicity and documentation for the forums, without exception:

- **Best interests:** In all matters relating to media coverage, publicity and documentation for the children's forums, the individual child's best interests are always the first priority. Individual children's rights are always more important than our own advocacy and publicity objectives. Children and their chaperones should be involved in defining where the child's best interests lie.
- **Informed consent:** The informed consent of the child and the child's parents or guardians must be obtained before any contact with the media or other publicity that could lead to personal/sensitive information about the child being published, or could lead to identification of the child (name, address, photograph etc.). The model informed consent form for parents and guardians in Annex 1 covers issues related to media and publications.
- **Privacy:** Because we are publicizing the fact that the children in the forums ARE victims of trafficking or vulnerable to trafficking, we must be careful to ensure that none of the children participating in the forum can be identified through media coverage or publicity (including documentation).
- **Direct contact:** All direct contact between media representatives and individual children must be voluntary on the part of the child, and the forum organizers will make every effort to prepare and support the child for such contact.
- **Quality of coverage:** The forum organizers will make every effort to ensure that media coverage, publicity and documentation of the children's forums is positive, ethical, respects the rights of the child, and contributes towards ILO-IPEC and SC UK advocacy objectives.

E.2 Guidelines on protecting the right to privacy

Unless stated otherwise, these rules cannot be broken even with children's informed consent.

- Never publish or give to journalists (or to anyone who does not have a legitimate reason for wanting to know) children's real names, addresses or any other information that could lead to any child being identified. This includes the name of their village or subdistrict, school and workplace.
- No images (photographs or videos) in which children can be identified should be released from the forum or used in our publications or anyone else's publications. The exception is children's photographs of each other and group/individual photos given to the children as souvenirs of the forum.
- The only photographs and video taken in the forum or related events should be taken by children or by a professional contracted by the forum organizers. Except for photographs taken by the children, all photographs and video should be screened (and altered if necessary) by the organizers and by the children concerned before they are given to the media or used in our own publications.

- If journalists insist on individual photographs or video to accompany children's personal stories, silhouette photographs or video – and the children concerned give their informed consent – our final compromise is the use of silhouette photography or video, or any other method that ensures that the child is not identifiable.
- Children's artwork or texts: Children should be told what uses you intend to, or might, use their artwork or text for, and asked which uses they consent to, and whether their real name, a false name or no name at all should be used with it. No children's artwork or text should be published and/or credited to them in a way they have not consented to. This includes uncredited use inside or on the covers of books and reports. The children's own explanations of art works should be written on the back or attached to the original, and should form the basis of a caption when the artwork is used.
- NEVER allow journalists access to information or take photographs or video footage that could be abused, even if they make promises that they will not abuse it. It will be out of our control, and possibly out of the journalist's control.
- NEVER believe journalists who promise that you (or the children) will be able to review their work before it is published. This will almost certainly not let you do so.

E.3 Preparing for media coverage

Assign a media coordinator (or press officer) to ensure thorough planning on practical arrangements for media access to the venue and to the young participants (credentials if applicable, room for media conferences/briefings, equipment, security/well-being/briefing of young people).

Set aside specific times to invite media to the forum (see below). Let all the participants know that they can choose whether to attend these media events.

Help the children to prepare interesting presentations for the media that are entertaining and photogenic and contain strong, clear and compelling messages.

Invite journalists from a range of media to reach different population segments and achieve advocacy objectives. With the invitation, media should be sent guidelines on acceptable behaviour, any rules on contact with children, and ethical reporting of children respecting children's privacy. The media coordinator should check that the journalists have read and understood these guidelines before they are allowed direct contact with the children.

E.4 When to invite media during the forums

Opening ceremony: Media could be invited to a short opening ceremony. The presence of celebrities (for example as keynote speaker) will make the ceremony more attractive to media. The event should be as colourful and energetic as possible.

Children's outings: These should only be photographed by the official forum photographer. They should be times for children to rest and relax.

During forum sessions: The media should generally not be invited to normal forum sessions. Their presence will be distracting for both children and adults and it will be much harder to protect children's right to privacy. However, if there is one publication that you are certain will give favourable, in-depth and ethical coverage, and will reach a wide audience, you may choose to invite the editor (or their representative) to attend some or all of the forum sessions. However, children must be asked whether they consent to this and have the right to exclude this journalist at any time. The participating children may also be comfortable with child journalists being present in some sessions.

Closing ceremony: Media presence at the closing ceremony is the most important. This is when children will present their Agenda for Action and any other advocacy messages. The ceremony should be designed with the children to be colourful, creative and surprising. Journalists should also be granted more one-to-one interviews with children. The presence of celebrities, especially ministers or senior officials, will help to attract media coverage.

E.5 Preparing for media contact

It is almost certain that journalists who come to the Voices of Children events will want to interview individual children in order to “humanize” their stories. This will help to ensure that the forum is covered and that the stories about it are more interesting.

For most people, it takes long experience and practice to feel confident and really in control in a media interview. If the journalist is hostile, intrusive or has an agenda that is different from yours, it is easy to say the wrong thing and then find your meaning has been twisted to send a different message. Some journalists will certainly be sympathetic to the children in the forums, but there is a chance that others may want to ridicule the idea of children’s participation in such an event, make the children look like victims – or even imply that the children are immoral or criminal.

Identify a small but diverse group of children who are willing to conduct one-to-one interviews with journalists. These children should be given full support and coaching before they have one-to-one interviews with journalists, especially if they will talk about their own experiences. These are the only children that journalists should be allowed direct contact with.

E:5.1 Coaching and support for interviews

- Some information and guidelines on the presence and function of the media at the national forum (including summaries of the rules on privacy, support available, and the guidance being sent to journalists) should be prepared and disseminated to the participants and chaperones ahead of the forum.
- Spend some time on the first day of the forum discussing with children the presence and function of the media in the forum, letting the children know which sessions you will be inviting media to attend, and going over other relevant guidelines.
- Coaching and support given to the selected children should include:
 - Help with preparing what they wish to say so that it is clear, unambiguous, interesting, and sends the message that they wish to send;
 - Help with anticipating journalists’ questions (especially difficult questions) and working out effective responses;
 - Mock interviews for practice.
- An adult, preferably the child’s chaperone and/or the media coordinator, should always accompany the child in an interview with a journalist; the child can request that the adult stays out of earshot, but the adult should be able to see the child’s non-verbal signals (see below). Before the interview, this adult should:
 - Reassure the child that they can terminate the interview anytime they feel uncomfortable with it, and they don’t have to answer questions that they do not want to;
 - Discuss with the child whether there are any topics they do not want to talk about or questions they do not want to answer. If there are, discuss whether the child would like the adult to intervene (or answer for them), and how;
 - Work out some discreet non-verbal signals (a hand or head movement, coloured cards etc.) that the child can use to tell you that they want you to intervene or stop the interview – children may feel too shy to say out loud that they do not want to discuss something.
- During the interview, this adult should:
 - Listen carefully to the interview and be vigilant for the child’s non-verbal signals;
 - Never “help” a child to answer except at the child’s request;
 - Never interrupt if the child gives wrong information or negative comments about anything related to Voices of Children. The organizers (or anyone else who is criticized) have a right to reply to such criticism, but this should be done after the interview and the child should be aware of it – and, if they wish, they should be able to listen and participate when the organizers give their reply. The reply should never involve criticism of the child concerned, and should only respond to the incorrect/negative statements.
- After the interview, the adult should:
 - Discuss with the child how they felt about the interview and whether they would like further contact with the journalist for clarifications or responses.

E:5.2 The child’s right to reply

Children who participate in the forums should all be sent translated copies of all media coverage before, during and after the event. If they feel that the forum, or they as individuals, have been unfairly represented, or if they want to send any other reply, they should be encouraged and helped to do this (including contacting the journal editor to make sure the reply is published, and that it is clear that it comes from a child/children. A published “letter to the Editor” from a child or group of children would be both powerful and empowering.

Steps for Approaching Children and Parents



Step 1: The child's provisional consent

- Prepare sufficient accurate and transparent information about the National Forum for the child to make an informed decision about whether they wish to participate.

This should include, at a minimum:

- Introduction to Voices of Children
 - When and where the National Forum will take place
 - Who will be participating
 - Outline of the agenda
 - Travel and pick-up arrangements
 - Media you are proposing to invite. Potential risks and concerns due to media coverage (risk of identification – short and long term, sensitive personal information being published and seen by a large number of people – including people the child knows; being asked to revisit traumatic experiences), and the steps that will be taken to minimize the risk (confidentiality of personal/identifying information about children; no press photographers or videos; no photos/video released publicly in which children can be identified; direct media access to only a few children who choose it, and only on a few occasions; etc. see Part E). If you will invite selected journalists to be present during the entire forum, let the children know this, and what code of conduct the journalists will be asked to follow.
- This information should also be given to the children in writing in order to show their parents.
 - Be prepared to answer further questions on logistics, forum content, background information etc.
 - Discuss with the children the need for a chaperone, and what the chaperone's role will be. Let the children know who you propose to be their chaperones and/or ask the children for suggestions.
 - The information could be presented to children in a group. However, children should give express their interest in participating individually. Children should have an opportunity to ask questions and raise concerns about the forum in private, under conditions of confidentiality.
 - Ask children who are interested in participating for permission to meet their parents or legal guardians to discuss it further and seek informed consent. Let the children know that their parents/guardians informed consent will be needed.
 - Set a date for meeting the parents/guardians at least two days after this meeting with the children.

Step 2 – Identification of chaperone

- Identify the chaperone(s) you propose will have responsibility over the children. Discuss with them their roles and responsibilities and expected behaviour during the forums.
- Give the children and chaperones an opportunity to get to know each other and to discuss the National Forum.
- If the children and the chaperone are comfortable with each other, send a letter to the chaperone (see Annex 2 for a model letter) and obtain at least a verbal agreement that they accept the roles and responsibilities.

Step 3 – Parents' or guardians' informed consent

- At the arranged date and time, go to meet the child's parents/guardians. The chaperone should be present at this meeting and the parents/guardians should be given enough time to get to know the chaperone (preferably before the meeting).

- Prepare sufficient information to allow the parents to make an informed decision on consent. In addition to the information provided to children, you should be able to provide detailed information on the forum venue, timing, accommodation for the children, travel arrangements, other adults present in the forum, and all codes of conduct and precautions for child protection, as well as the limits and extent of the responsibility of the chaperone and of the organizers.
- Make sure the parents/guardians and children are aware of any risk.
- Give the parents/guardians a chance to look over the Informed Consent Form (see Annex 1 for a model), and explain every clause, making sure the parents/guardians understand it fully.
- If the parents agree to give their consent, and the child still gives their consent, complete the Informed Consent Form and ask the parents/guardians to sign it.
- Ask the parents about any history of illness the child has, any medical support they may need, and any cultural requirements (for example diet, prayer times). Record these carefully and make sure the chaperone keeps a copy and a copy is available at the forum venue.
- Discuss and agree arrangements for picking up and dropping off the child.

Step 4 – Picking up and dropping off the child

- When it is time to leave for the National Forum, the chaperone, with another responsible adult approved by the organizers and/or approved by the child and parents/guardians, should pick up the child directly from the parents/guardians. The chaperone should check verbally that the child and parents/guardians still give their consent.
- When the forum is over, the chaperone, with another responsible adult approved by the organizers and/or approved by the child and parents/guardians, should take the child directly to the parents/guardians, or leave the child with another responsible adult as pre-arranged with the parents/guardians.

Suggested Resources



***Learning to Work Together: A handbook for managers on facilitating children's participation in actions to address child labour.* Regional Working Group on Child Labour 2003. Can be downloaded in electronic format from http://www.seapa.net/external/special/reports/Rwg_cl.htm**

***So You Want to Consult with Children? A toolkit of good practice.* Sarah Stevenson, for the International Save the Children Alliance Child Participation Working Group, 2003. An electronic copy should have accompanied the guidelines. Short and clearly written, it is highly recommended. Can be downloaded in electronic format from www.savethechildren.net/alliance/resources/childconsult_toolkit_final.pdf.**

***12 Lessons Learned from Children's Participation in the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children.* Save the Children. Can be downloaded in electronic format from www.savethechildren.net/alliance/resources/12lessons.pdf**

Sample Parental / Legal Guardian Consent Form

[This is a model (not finalized) consent form for the Mekong Children's Forum. You should adapt it for the national forum and translate it into a language that the child's parents/legal guardian can understand. The parents'/guardian's consent should be sought only after the child has expressed their own informed consent. The parents or guardians should have every item in the form explained to them upon request and should be given background information about the forum, including the forum's purpose and venue, the possible presence of media, the child protection precautions being taken, transportation etc. before they are asked to complete the form.]

Informed consent of parents/guardians for children's participation in the Mekong Children's Forum

The contents of this document should be read and explained to the parents/guardians who will sign it.

I/We, **(names of parent(s)/guardian(s))** _____ give my/our consent for my/our son/daughter/ward **(name of child)** _____, born on **(date of birth of child)** _____, ID Card No. **(ID Card No. of child)** _____, to travel to (place) in the company of **(name of chaperone)** _____, of **(chaperone's home address)** _____ ID Card No. **(ID Card No. of chaperone)** _____, to participate in the Mekong Children's Forum "Human Trafficking – Voices of Children", which will take place from 11–17 October 2004 in Bangkok, Thailand.

I/We appoint **(name of chaperone)** _____ to be responsible for my/our son/daughter/ward **(name of child)** _____ during this trip. In particular, I/we authorize **(name of chaperone)** _____ to make decisions concerning any emergency medical treatment for my/our son/daughter/ward **(name of child)** _____ which may be required during this trip. I/We affirm that arrangements for medical insurance to cover our son/daughter/ward during this trip have been made.

I/we understand that **(name of chaperone)** _____, Save the Children UK and the International Labour Office will take every care to protect the safety and well-being of my/our son/daughter/ward **(name of child)** _____. However, I/we also understand that that **(name of chaperone)** _____, Save the Children UK and the International Labour Office accept no responsibility if my/our son/daughter/ward **(name of child)** _____ chooses to leave the forum, against the advice of (and without the assistance or encouragement of) **(name of chaperone)** _____, Save the Children UK and the International Labour Office. In such cases, responsibility will pass to the local authorities.

I/We understand that Save the Children UK, the International Labour Office and **(partners' names)** _____ associated with the Mekong Children's Forum "Human Trafficking – Voices of Children", assume no responsibility for my/our son/daughter/ward **(name of child)** _____ or for any injury or loss sustained by my/our son/daughter/ward **(name of child)** _____ arising out of or related to from my/our son's/daughter's/ward's participation in the Mekong Children's Forum.

I/We understand that journalists representing local and international media may be present during some sessions of the Mekong Children's Forum "Human Trafficking – Voices of Children", and that documentation of the Mekong Children's Forum "Human Trafficking – Voices of Children" will be published by Save the Children UK, the International Labour Organization or their assignees, for non-commercial educational or informational purposes.

As parent/guardian, I waive all rights of copyright or ownership in or to the resulting educational/informational materials in which my child appears, and acknowledge no monetary or other compensation is provided in exchange for waiving this right.

I/We do/do not (delete as appropriate) grant Save the Children UK and the International Labour Office permission to publish, publicly exhibit, or release to media representatives photographic, video or audio recordings of my/our son/daughter/ward **(name of child)** _____.

I/We do/do not (delete as appropriate) grant Save the Children UK and the International Labour Office permission to publish, publicly exhibit, or release to media representatives creative work by my/our son/daughter/ward **(name of child)** _____.

I/We appoint **(name of chaperone)** _____ to be responsible during this trip for (please circle either a), b) or c))

a) ensuring that the rights and best interests of my/our son/daughter/ward **(name of child)** _____ are protected during any contact with the media to which **(name of child)** _____ gives his/her informed consent. (The child may be approached directly by media representatives and may be interviewed.)

or

b) ensuring that there is no direct contact between media representatives and my/our son/daughter/ward **(name of child)** _____. (The child may not be approached directly or interviewed by media representatives, but may appear in photographs).

or

c) ensuring that there is no direct or indirect contact between media representatives and my/our son/daughter/ward **(name of child)** _____. (The child may not be approached directly or interviewed by media representatives, and may not appear in photographs).

I/We affirm that I/we have full authority to give the consent provided for in this document.

Name of Participant _____ (Print name clearly)

Name(s) of Parent(s)/Guardian(s) _____

(Print name(s) clearly) _____

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Signature(s) _____

Date: _____

Acknowledgement and Agreement by Accompanying Adult (Chaperone)

I agree to the undertakings and responsibilities assigned me in this document.

Chaperone's Signature: _____

(Full name of Chaperone:) _____

Model Letter for Chaperones

MODEL LETTER FOR CHAPERONES IN NATIONAL FORUMS

– please prepare a letter for chaperones in their language. It should include, at a minimum, all of the information below.

Dear

Save the Children UK and the International Labour Organization would like to thank you for agreeing to act as chaperone for children participating in the [YOUR COUNTRY] children's forum "Human Trafficking – The Voice of [YOUR COUNTRY'S] Children". We expect this to be an inspiring, enlightening and fun event.

Your responsibilities

As a chaperone, you will be granted responsibility for the safety and well-being of the children you accompany. It is important to realize that this responsibility will start from the moment the children leave their parents or guardians and end the moment you return them safely to their parents or guardians.

As chaperone, your responsibilities will include:

- Facilitating the children's travel to the meeting and back home.
- Facilitating the movement of the children from one place to another during the time of the forum.
- Being aware of the children's whereabouts at all times.
- Keeping the children out of situations in which they may be abducted, tricked or lured away, for the purposes of work, exploitation or abuse.
- Being vigilant for indications that the child may be planning to run away, and preventing them from doing so.
- Providing information, advice and support to the children when needed.
- Providing encouragement and support for the children's participation in the meeting.
- Ensuring that the children can relax and participate in the discussions.
- Being aware of the physical and emotional needs of the children in your care and assisting in meeting these needs as appropriate.
- Informing the organizers of any difficulties that the children under your care are experiencing.
- Offering the children opportunities, and providing support for, de-briefing, feedback with their peer group and follow-up activities once the children have returned home.
- You should make sure you have each of the children's medical and emergency information in your possession at all times. The parental informed consent form grants you the responsibility of acting on the children's behalf in case of a medical emergency.

You should be aware that most of the children coming to the National Forum live in communities or families in which children and young people tend to migrate to seek work or a better life. There is a small risk that some of these children may take being transported to [CITY] as an opportunity to migrate, and try to run away; equally, they may be coerced or tricked into leaving the forum by others inside or outside the forum.

You will be expected to be vigilant for indications that the child may be planning to do so. If you do believe that a child might be planning to do so, you should alert the forum organizers and take steps to prevent it. These should include, first of all, discussing it with the child – unless you feel that this might increase the risk that they will run away. Beyond this, and

if possible in consultation with the forum organizers, you should take whatever further steps are necessary to stop the child running away, being careful to balance the child's rights to privacy, freedom of movement and free communication with the best interests of the child.

However, we are aware that it may not be possible to prevent such an occurrence, and you cannot be held responsible. If a child does leave the forum against your advice and despite your sincere efforts to stop them, responsibility will pass to the police or other relevant local authorities. You will be expected to cooperate fully with the forum organizers and the responsible authorities.

Measures to protect children's rights in the National Forum

[THE ORGANIZERS] take the protection and rights of participating children very seriously. To help you with your task of protecting the children, we have established a comprehensive set of guidelines, rules and measures to be implemented during the period of the forum. Among these are:

- Restricted access to the forum space – only people with a good, legitimate reason for being there will be allowed in;
- No release of photographs, video or personal information about participating children from which the children can be identified; journalists will not be allowed to take photographs or video of the children;
- All children will have travel, medical, personal accident and liability insurance for all the time they are in your care;
- Children will be involved as far as possible in decisions that affect them.

You can ask [THE ORGANIZERS] for more details of the guidelines and measures for child protection and children's participation that will be applied in the National Forum.

Code of conduct

Finally, you will be expected to follow certain rules of conduct while the children are in your care:

You should avoid spending excessive time alone with children away from others.

You must never:

- Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children
- Develop physical/sexual relationships with children
- Develop relationships with children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive
- Act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse.
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive
- Behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative
- Have a participating child stay overnight in your room
- Do things for children of a personal nature that they can do for themselves
- Condone, or participate in, behaviour of children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse
- Discriminate against, show differential treatment, or favour particular children to the exclusion of others.
- Try to influence the contributions or decisions of the children in your care while they are participating in the forums. However, you may offer advice and information at the children's request.

We look forward to working with you in what we hope will be an inspiring, enlightening, safe and fun event.

Yours truly

Introduction to Voices of Children

Suggested model for introducing children and their parents to the Voices of Children process. Please translate and adapt as appropriate. Myanmar team, please remove references to ILO-IPEC and change or delete the paragraph about the Mekong Children's Forum.

Voices of Children

Children speak out on human trafficking

Voices of Children is an opportunity for children to say what they think about trafficking in children. And what they think about the action that governments, NGOs, the UN and children themselves are taking to prevent trafficking and to help (or punish) the child victims of trafficking.

What should we be doing?

What should your government be doing?

What should your family and community be doing?

What can you do?

This is your chance to stand up and be heard.

Coming Together

The Voices of [YOUR COUNTRY – PLEASE NOTE IN CHINA IT SHOULD BE “YUNNAN PROVINCE” AND “PROVINCIAL,” NOT “NATIONAL” THROUGHOUT] Children Forum will bring together around [PLEASE FILL IN] children from your [COUNTRY/PROVINCE/ REGION]. These children will go to [VENUE CITY OF NATIONAL FORUM] for [] days (on [DATES]) to share their experiences and their dreams, and together make an Agenda for Action that says what the children think is important – and what the government and others should be doing to protect children from the evil of trafficking and give them a better, safer life.

All the children who come to the National Forum will be children who have been the victims of traffickers themselves, or who live in communities and areas where many children are trafficked, so they will have a lot to say.

We, Save the Children UK and ILO-IPEC, will make sure that what the children in the National Forum say is heard far and wide – and especially by the people who can really make a difference. We will invite government ministers and officials to the National Forum, so that children can talk directly to them {DELETE IF THIS IS NOT HAPPENING IN YOUR COUNTRY}. We will also ask newspapers and television and radio channels to let everyone know about the National Forum and what the children say.

Mekong Children's Forum

Three or four children from the National Forum will also be chosen to go to another Children's Forum in Bangkok, Thailand, in October. These children will carry messages from their National Forum and share ideas and experiences with children coming from four countries – Cambodia, China, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam [PLEASE DELETE YOUR COUNTRY'S NAME], and create a Mekong Sub-region Children's Agenda for Action on Trafficking.

Who are we?

Two organizations are organizing the Voices of Children children's forums: Save the Children UK and ILO-IPEC (the International Labour Organization's International Programme to Eliminate Child Labour).

Save the Children UK is an international NGO that works for children's rights around the world. Save the Children UK has been working in [YOUR COUNTRY] for [YEARS] [SOME INFORMATION ABOUT SC UK NATIONAL PROGRAMME AND ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING ACTIVITIES THAT THE CHILDREN MIGHT HAVE DIRECT EXPERIENCE OF].

The ILO is an agency of the United Nations (UN) that is concerned with the rights of workers and employers. ILO-IPEC is an international ILO programme that "works for the progressive elimination of child labour worldwide". ILO-IPEC works with governments and others to protect children from work that stops them enjoying their rights – to education, to rest, to health, to protection, and to a safe and happy life and future. [INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR NATIONAL PROGRAMME AND ACTIVITIES].

Trafficking is a serious violation of children's rights. It is also considered one of the worst forms of child labour. For these reasons, Save the Children UK and ILO-IPEC recognize trafficking as one of the most important issues that they work against.

How can we make a difference?

There's a good reason why the Voices of Children forums are taking place now. At the end of October 2004, government ministers from Cambodia, China, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam will meet in Yangon, Myanmar, to plan how they should work together against the trafficking of children and adults.

This initiative is called COMMIT, which stands for the "Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative Against Trafficking".

Save the Children UK and ILO-IPEC believe that the ministers and officials in COMMIT should hear what children have to say about this – because children are trafficked, and because children have a right to be listened to when it comes to matters that affect them.

We will do our best to make sure that the ministers understand why they should listen to children when they are making their Plan of Action on human trafficking. And we will make sure that they hear what children in the Voices of [YOUR COUNTRY] Children Forum have to say.

Together, we hope we can persuade the ministers and senior officials to agree on a Plan of Action that helps and protects children from the dangers of trafficking, and ensures that children's voices will always be listened to when trafficking in children is discussed in [YOUR COUNTRY].

Responsibilities and Code of Conduct for Chaperones/Interpreters

VIII

This was sent as part of a letter to chaperones and interpreters

Responsibilities – Interpreting

Interpreting for children in the Mekong Children’s Forum is a great responsibility. How well you do your job will have a lot of influence over the success of the Mekong Children’s Forum. With your help, children from your country will be able to participate actively and meaningfully.

Your roles:

Translating everything that is said in English to the children from your country and translating it into your language, and translating everything a child from your country wants to say (to the group or to individual children from another country) into English.

- When: during the forum sessions, during breaks, and during recreation time (including the evenings).
- How: you should translate everything that is said, in full. Do not try to summarize or select what you tell the children who you are interpreting for, and do not try to “improve” what they say.
- As well as translating, you may also need to explain some documents, activities or presentations to children.

Making your job easier:

- We will hold regular meetings with you to discuss issues related to interpreting and how we can make your job easier. We want to hear your ideas.
- The forum facilitators will try to ensure that only one person speaks at a time, and that discussions and presentations are paced slowly enough for you to interpret well.
- We will share relevant documents (including the contents of any presentations given in the forum, if we can) with you beforehand, so you can prepare yourself.
- We will try to schedule enough breaks and activities that children can do in their country groups to give you a chance to rest.

Responsibilities – Chaperoning

As chaperone, you are responsible at all times for the safety and well-being of the children you accompany.

As chaperone, your responsibilities include:

- Ensuring that children’s best interests are protected at all times.
- Accompanying the children whenever they leave the We-Train Centre (the forum venue, where the children will also be staying).
- Knowing where the children are at all times.
- Keeping the children out of situations in which they may be abducted, tricked or lured away, for the purposes of work, exploitation or abuse.
- Providing information, advice and support to the children when needed.
- Being aware of the physical and emotional needs of the children in your care.
- Informing the organizers of any difficulties that the children under your care are experiencing.
- Acting on the children’s behalf in case of a medical emergency.

Whenever it is possible, please discuss with children before you decide to take action in their best interests.

Help and support

To help you with your task of protecting the children, we have established a comprehensive set of guidelines, rules and measures to be implemented during the period of the forum. Among these are:

- Restricted access to the forum space – only people with a good, legitimate reason for being there will be allowed in;
- Media will have limited access to the children and steps will be taken to keep children away from journalists if they wish.
- Personal information about the children will be kept confidential and shared only when it is absolutely necessary.
- All children will have travel, medical, personal accident and liability insurance for all the time they are in your care;
- Children will be involved as far as possible in decisions that affect them.

For more details of the guidelines and measures for child protection and children's participation in the Mekong Children's Forum, please ask Save the Children UK or ILO.

Code of Conduct for All Adults in the Mekong Children's Forum

With this letter you should find a copy of the Code of Conduct for Adults that we will expect every adult attending the Mekong Children's Forum to follow. In addition to these, chaperone/interpreters:

- should avoid spending excessive time alone with children away from others.
- must never:
 - Develop physical/sexual relationships with children.
 - Develop relationships with children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive.
 - Act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse.
 - Use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive.
 - Behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative.
 - Have a participating child stay overnight in your room.
 - Do things for children of a personal nature that they can do for themselves.
 - Condone, or participate in, behaviour of children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive.
 - Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse
 - Discriminate against, show differential treatment, or favour particular children to the exclusion of others.

Parents’/Guardians’ informed consent form for the Mekong Children’s Forum



The Mekong Children’s Forum “Human Trafficking – the Voice of Mekong Children”

Informed consent of parents/guardians for children’s participation in the Mekong Children’s Forum

The contents of this document should be read and explained to the parents/guardians who will sign it.

I/We, (names of parent(s)/guardian(s)) _____ give my/our consent for my/our son/daughter/ward (name of child) _____, born on (date of birth of child) _____, ID Card No. (ID Card No. of child) _____, to travel to (place) in the company of (name of chaperone) _____, of (chaperone’s home address) _____ ID Card No. (ID Card No. of chaperone) _____, to participate in the Mekong Children’s Forum “Human Trafficking – Voices of Children”, which will take place from 11–17 October 2004 in Bangkok, Thailand.

I/We appoint (name of chaperone) _____ to be responsible for my/our son/daughter/ward (name of child) _____ during this trip. In particular, I/we authorize (name of chaperone) _____ to make decisions concerning any emergency medical treatment for my/our son/daughter/ward (name of child) _____ which may be required during this trip. I/We affirm that arrangements for medical insurance to cover our son/daughter/ward during this trip have been made.

I/we understand that (name of chaperone) _____, Save the Children UK and the International Labour Office will take every care to protect the safety and well-being of my/our son/daughter/ward (name of child) _____. However, I/we also understand that that (name of chaperone) _____, Save the Children UK and the International Labour Office accept no responsibility if my/our son/daughter/ward (name of child) _____ chooses to leave the forum, against the advice of (and without the assistance or encouragement of) (name of chaperone) _____, Save the Children UK and the International Labour Office. In such cases, responsibility will pass to the local authorities.

I/We understand that Save the Children UK, the International Labour Office and (partners’ names) associated with the Mekong Children’s Forum “Human Trafficking – Voices of Children”, assume no responsibility for my/our son/daughter/ward (name of child) _____ or for any injury or loss sustained by my/our son/daughter/ward (name of child) _____ arising out of or related to from my/our son’s/daughter’s/ward’s participation in the Mekong Children’s Forum.

I/We understand that journalists representing local and international media may be present during some sessions of the Mekong Children’s Forum “Human Trafficking – Voices of Children”, and that documentation of the Mekong Children’s Forum “Human Trafficking – Voices of Children” will be published by Save the Children UK, the International Labour Organization or their assignees, for non-commercial educational or informational purposes.

As parent/guardian, I waive all rights of copyright or ownership in or to the resulting educational/informational materials in which my child appears, and acknowledge no monetary or other compensation is provided in exchange for waiving this right.

I/We do/do not **(delete as appropriate)** _____ grant Save the Children UK and the International Labour Office permission to publish, publicly exhibit, or release to media representatives photographic, video or audio recordings of my/our son/daughter/ward **(name of child)** _____.

I/We do/do not **(delete as appropriate)** _____ grant Save the Children UK and the International Labour Office permission to publish, publicly exhibit, or release to media representatives creative work by my/our son/daughter/ward **(name of child)** _____.

I/We appoint **(name of chaperone)** _____ to be responsible during this trip for (please circle either a), b) or c))

a) ensuring that the rights and best interests of my/our son/daughter/ward **(name of child)** _____ are protected during any contact with the media to which **(name of child)** _____ gives his/her informed consent. (The child may be approached directly by media representatives and may be interviewed.)

or

b) ensuring that there is no direct contact between media representatives and my/our son/daughter/ward **(name of child)** _____. (The child may not be approached directly or interviewed by media representatives, but may appear in photographs).

or

c) ensuring that there is no direct or indirect contact between media representatives and my/our son/daughter/ward **(name of child)** _____. (The child may not be approached directly or interviewed by media representatives, and may not appear in photographs).

I/We affirm that I/we have full authority to give the consent provided for in this document.

Name of Participant _____ (Print name clearly)

Name(s) of Parent(s)/Guardian(s) _____

(Print name(s) clearly) _____

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Signature(s) _____

Date: _____

Acknowledgement and Agreement by Accompanying Adult (Chaperone)

I agree to the undertakings and responsibilities assigned me in this document.

Chaperone's Signature _____

(Full name of Chaperone) _____

Information for seeking informed consent for children's participation in the Mekong Children's Forum



This note was sent to national forum organizers to help them with seeking informed consent for children's participation in the Mekong Children's Forum.

In addition to the general information about the purpose of Voices of Children, you could give the parents/guardians and children the following information while seeking informed consent for children's participation in the Mekong Children's Forum.

Please do your best to present this information in the way you think is most appropriate – probably verbally. It is important that the parents/guardians and the children understand all of the information and that they understand every section of the Informed Consent form before they sign it.

The Mekong Children's Forum will take place at the We-Train Centre in Bangkok, near Bangkok Airport:

**501/1 Dechatungka Road, Don Muang,
Bangkok, Thailand 10210
Tel. (+662) 967-8550-4**

Please make sure that parents/guardians have the full address and contact details of We-Train, of your national ILO or Save the Children UK office, and details of transport from their home to the We-Train Centre and back again

Child Protection Precautions

In all matters, ILO and Save the Children UK, the organizers of the Mekong Children's Forum, will put the child's best interests and welfare before all other considerations.

Precautions to protect child participants:

- Save the Children UK and ILO will do their best to ensure that the child does not come into contact with any adult who could pose a threat to the child, either during the forum or when traveling to or from the forum.
- During the forum, the child will be accompanied by the chaperone or another responsible adult whenever they leave the We-Train Centre.
- The child will be given a card with map, emergency contact numbers etc.
- There will be a qualified nurse available at the We-Train Centre.
- The child will sleep in dormitory-style accommodation at the We-Train Centre, with children of the same sex only.

Media Coverage of the Mekong Children's Forum

Media coverage is very important to the success of the Mekong Children's Forum. It will help for a lot of people around the Mekong Sub-region, including your country, and around the world, to hear about the Forum and hear what children have to say.

Media coverage of the national forums and the Mekong Children's Forum has so far been positive and sympathetic.

Media coverage means that your child's words and perhaps photograph might be put in newspapers and perhaps heard on the radio or seen on the television.

Every child has a right to speak to the media if he or she wishes. It can be very exciting and give the child a chance to speak to thousands, even millions, of people.

But the most important thing is your child's best interest. That is why we are asking you about contact between the media and your child.

We cannot ultimately control how the media report on the Mekong Children's Forum or what they say about the children who take part. Although we will take every precaution to avoid it, the media may publish personal, sensitive, incorrect or unsympathetic information about your child.

How bad media coverage could affect your child:

Friends, neighbours, employers, teachers etc. might see the media coverage. They might be envious; they might gossip about why the child was invited to the forum (and maybe spread some bad rumours); or they might just keep talking about it until it becomes annoying to the child.

There is a chance that what the media says will be remembered for a long time, which could affect the child's reputation for many years.

How we will try to ensure that media coverage is a good, positive experience for your child:

- Inviting only a few journalists that we think will be respectful and sympathetic to children
- Telling the journalists all the good things about the Mekong Children's Forum, why it is taking place, and tell them about the good and valuable contribution that the children are making.

We will also:

- Not give any personal information about individual children to journalists (including the child's real name or where you live).
- Ask journalists not to publish any personal or sensitive information about the children.
- Ask journalists not to publish photographs or television images of children who do not want it.
- Make sure a chaperone and an organizer is present during any interview between a journalist and a child, and give the child some training beforehand.

What media will we invite to the Mekong Children's Forum?

Journalists will be invited to only one event during the Mekong Children's Forum, lasting only about two hours:

- Some very respected international news organizations
- One or two national newspapers from each country
- One or two Thai television channels may also be invited.
- A journalist from one Thai English-language newspaper, probably the Bangkok Post, to come to the whole forum.

Please be aware that other media might copy the story from one of these sources.

If you are worried that media contact is not in your child's best interests, please discuss it with your child first and then fill in the forum appropriately. Even if you do not allow any contact between your child and the media, your child is welcome to take part in the Mekong Children's Forum.

Even if you give your consent for media contact, your child can still decide during the forum not to have contact with the media, and we will respect his or her wishes. Even if a child changes his or her mind in the middle of an interview with a journalist, he or she can stop the interview and should not feel guilty. However, if you (parents/guardians) do not give your consent, we will not allow any contact between journalists and your child.

XI

We adults are still learning how we can give children chances to have your voices heard. You can help us to learn. Please take some time to fill in this form so we can know your feelings and ideas.

It's the end of the Forum. How Are You Feeling?

☹ | ☺

environment, meeting room, accommodation, food etc.

☹ | ☺

Information

Written information, rules presentations, logistics
Was it clear? Was it interesting? Was it useful? Was it enough?

☹ _____ ☺

Comments

Being heard

Do you feel that your voice was heard? Do the “Children’s Recommendations” reflect your ideas?

☹ | ☺

Comments

The Forum

Was it done well? Did children have enough control or too much?

☹ | ☺

Comments

The UN Event (yesterday)

How do you feel about the Dialogue with Senior Officials? The children's performances and marketplace?
The media arrangements?

Comments

Fun!

games, trips, free time, forum sessions, etc.

☹️ _____ ☺️

Comments

Safety and adult support

Did you feel safe? Did you feel supported? Were your problems and complaints dealt with?

☹️ _____ ☺️

Comments

Anything else you want to tell us about?

[illegible]

Evaluation Questionnaire on National/Provincial Children's Forums on Human Trafficking – for Partner Organizations

Dear [NAME OF CONTACT IN COUNTRY PARTNER ORG]

We are currently evaluating the success and achievements of the sub-regional Mekong Children's Forum as well as the national/provincial children's forums that led up to it, which were co-organized by International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour of the International Labour Organization (ILO-IPEC) and Save the Children UK, along with different partner organizations in each country.

As one of the partners who helped to organize the [NAME OF COUNTRY] Children's Forum on Human Trafficking, [NAME OF RESPONDENT'S ORGANIZATION]'s experiences and perspectives in relation to the forum would be invaluable. We would therefore greatly appreciate it if you could take the time to complete this questionnaire.

All of your answers will be treated in strict confidence and circulated to a limited number of people within ILO-IPEC and Save the Children UK. We will not quote or disseminate any part of your answers without your written permission.

Completed forms should be returned by 15 November 2004 to:

Caspar Trimmer, Consultant, Voices of Children initiative

e-mail: caspar@loxinfo.co.th

If you will not be able to complete the questionnaire by the deadline, or if you have any questions, please contact Caspar at: caspar@loxinfo.co.th or telephone: +(66) 9 152 7319

ILO-IPEC and SC UK would like to extend their sincere thanks for your help.

Yours sincerely

Thetis Mangahas, Programme Manager, ILO-IPEC Mekong Project to Combat Trafficking in Children and Women

Mark Capaldi, Regional Coordinator, Save the Children UK Southeast and East Asia and Pacific Regional Office

HOW TO COMPLETE THE QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is designed to be filled out on a computer and submitted by e-mail. However, you can also print it and fax or mail it.

Most questions have a row of possible responses below. Please use bold or underline to highlight the response that is closest to your own view.

You can use the "Comments and suggestions" space below each question for specific comments, strengths and weaknesses, lessons learned and suggestions for how things could be done better next time.

Important: Terms used

"The MCF process": this refers to the entire process leading up to, and beyond, the sub-regional children's forum that took place in Bangkok on October 11-17 2004 (including the national children's forums).

"The subregional children's forum": this refers specifically to the children's forum in Bangkok.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Name:

Organization:.....

Country in which you work:

Overall success

1) In your perception, was the national/provincial children's forum your organization helped to organize a success overall?

Counterproductive Unsuccessful Successful Very successful No opinion

Advocacy and media

ILO-IPEC and SC UK initiated the Mekong Children's Forum process under a joint advocacy initiative between the two organizations: Voices of Children. It aimed to reach a broad range of people. In the national and subregional children's forums, ministers and/or senior officials involved in anti-trafficking work were invited to a dialogue with the children. Mass media were also important to publicize the children's messages. Other advocacy/communications activities included briefings and personal contacts with partner agencies and a website (www.mekongchildrensforum.com).

2) Do you think the children's messages from the national/provincial children's forum in your country, and the value of participatory approaches in anti-trafficking policy-making and planning, were **well publicized and promoted** through the national/provincial children's forum and follow-up activities?

Very poorly publicized and promoted Poorly publicized and promoted No opinion/don't know Well publicized and promoted Extremely well publicized and promoted

Comments and suggestions

3) How did the national/provincial children's forum and its follow-up **affect your attitudes** towards children's participation in finding solutions to human trafficking?

4) Have you seen or heard any **indications that the MCF process has succeeded in changing attitudes and behaviour** related to children's participation in finding solutions to human trafficking – among local, national and sub-regional decision makers; organizations involved in anti-trafficking work; civil society; communities; children? Please describe these indications.

5) In order to protect vulnerable children participating in the children's forums, SC UK and ILO-IPEC recommended a set of principles and guidelines for contact between children and media; however, these were not always implemented fully in the national/provincial forums. Do you think that the **precautions and arrangements for contact between children and media** during your national/provincial children's forum were appropriate, ethical and successful?

Involvement of children

All children have the right to voice their opinions and share their ideas. Children affected by anti-trafficking and safe migration policies and measures have a particular right to be heard in events like the Mekong Children's Forums.

6) How appropriate do you think the mix of children in the national/provincial children's forum was?

Very inappropriate Inappropriate Quite appropriate Very appropriate No opinion/don't know

7) Comments and suggestions

8) How could more children, especially those in the most affected groups, be involved next time?

Child protection and best interests

Because the MCF process actively tried to involve children vulnerable to trafficking and children with past experience of trafficking, the organizers were very careful to develop principles, guidelines and mechanisms to protect participating children, and to ensure these were implemented. These were not always implemented in the same ways in the national/provincial forums.

- 8) Did you receive a copy of the Preliminary Guidelines from SC UK and ILO-IPEC?
If not, were the policies and guidelines in the Preliminary Guidelines explained to you?
- 9) Do you think the policies and guidelines in the Preliminary Guidelines were appropriate to protect children's rights and best interests?

Very inappropriate Inappropriate Quite appropriate Very appropriate No opinion/don't know

Comments and suggestions

- 10) Do you think sufficient and appropriate precautions and rules were followed during the national/provincial forums to protect children and promote their best interests?

Strongly disagree Disagree Agree Strongly agree No opinion/don't know

Comments and suggestions

- 11) Do you know of any problems encountered by participating children during the national/provincial children's forum (including travel to and from the forum)? Please describe the problems and how they were dealt with? Was this the right way to deal with them?

Partnership

- 12) How would you describe your workload in the national/provincial forum process?

- 13) Do you think partnership added significant value in the national/provincial children's forum process?

No value added Little value added Some value added Much value added No opinion/don't know

- 14) Comments and suggestions

What were the most important strengths and weaknesses related to this partnership?

Strengths Weaknesses

The National/Provincial forum

- 15) Do you think the participating children were provided with an enabling environment to share their ideas and experiences freely and without adult manipulation?

Comments and suggestions

- 16) Do you think children had enough timely and appropriate information (training, printed information, technical input in the forum etc.) to participate meaningfully?

Comments and suggestions

- 17) Do you think the Dialogue with Senior Officials and any media events at the national/provincial forum were appropriate and successful?

Comments and suggestions ...

18) How do you rate logistical arrangements and administrative support in the national/provincial forum?

Comments and suggestions ...

19) Did you support any children to attend the sub-regional Mekong Children's Forum? If so, please provide any comments or suggestions you have about the information and support you received from ILO-IPEC and/or Save the Children UK related to sending the children to Bangkok (travel, visas etc.).

20) Do you have **any other comments or suggestions** related to the national/provincial children's forum or the Mekong Children's Forum process in general?

Evaluation and Lessons Learned

For the Mekong Children's Forum Process and the Sub-regional Children's Forum

Dear Colleagues

Because you were directly involved in the Mekong Children's Forum (MCF) process, your insights and comments are invaluable in trying to build up a picture of how the project went and in finding out how we can do it better next time. I hope you will be able to find time to fill out this questionnaire.

This questionnaire has been designed in consultation with ILO-IPEC and Save the Children UK. It will be used to make a short evaluation of the Mekong Children's Forum and the Voices of Children process to date, and to identify suggestions and lessons learned for future children's participation in our work.

HOW TO COMPLETE THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire is designed to be completed on your computer and then emailed back to me at caspar@loxinfo.co.th. Because the questionnaire is to be filled out on a computer, you can make your responses and comments as long as you want.

Many of the "questions" are actually statements. For example:

8) The policies and guidelines developed for the MCF process were appropriate to protect children's rights and best interests.

I strongly disagree I disagree I agree I strongly agree No opinion/don't know

Comments and suggestions

You should bold or underline the one response that is closest to your own overall attitude to the statement (for example "disagree" or "agree"). Please bold or underline) "No opinion/don't know" if you have no opinion or are not in a position to answer the question (for example if it refers to a process you were not involved in). You can use the optional "comments and suggestions" space below each statement to explain your response, provide more specific detail, and give suggestions for how it could be done better.

You can use the last section of the questionnaire – "Any other comments or suggestions" – for additional information and comments that you could not find a place for earlier.

Please feel free to be critical as well as positive. All of your responses will be treated in strict confidence – if they are quoted or passed on by me to ILO-IPEC or Save the Children UK regional offices, they will be attributed only to "a chapter-one/interpreter" or "a facilitator".

PLEASE NOTE: In this questionnaire, to avoid confusion, "Mekong Children's Forum process" (or "MCF process") refers to the entire initiative to date, up to and including the national children's forums and the sub-regional Mekong Children's Forum. "Sub-regional children's forum" refers specifically to the event that took place in Bangkok 11-17 October 2004.

Thank you for your help, and for your incredible energy and commitment during the Mekong Children's Forum.

Yours

Caspar Trimmer

QUESTIONNAIRE

Name (optional):

What were your role roles in the MCF process? (please make bold or underline as appropriate):

- Organizer (at the sub-regional level);
- Organizer (at the national level);
- Facilitator (in the sub-regional forum);
- Chaperone/interpreter (in the sub-regional forum);

Were you involved in the national/provincial children's forum on trafficking in your country?

Yes No

Overall success

1) In your perception, the MCF process was a success overall.

I strongly disagree I disagree I agree I strongly agree No opinion

Advocacy and media

The MCF process was an advocacy initiative that aimed to reach a broad range of people. In the national and subregional children's forums, ministers and/or senior officials involved in anti-trafficking work were invited to a dialogue with the children. Mass media were also important to publicize the children's messages. Other advocacy/communications activities included briefings and personal contacts with partner agencies and a website (www.mekongchildrensforum.com).

2) The children's messages from the national/provincial children's forum in your country, and the value of participatory approaches in anti-trafficking policy-making and planning, were well publicized and promoted through the MCF process

I strongly disagree I disagree I agree I strongly agree No opinion/don't know

Comments and suggestions

3) The children's messages from the sub-regional children's forum, and the value of participatory approaches in anti-trafficking policy-making and planning, were well publicized and promoted through the MCF process.

I strongly disagree I disagree I agree I strongly agree No opinion/don't know

Comments and suggestions

4) Do you know of any anecdotal evidence that the MCF process succeeded in changing attitudes and behaviour related to children's participation in anti-trafficking policy-making and planning – among local, national and sub-regional decision makers; IPEC and SC UK staff; other organizations involved in anti-trafficking work; civil society; communities; children? Please describe it.

5) Media arrangements during the children's forums (informed consent to media contact, restricted contact between journalists and children, adults accompanying children during interviews) were appropriate and successful.

I strongly disagree I disagree I agree I strongly agree No opinion/don't know

Comments and suggestions

Involvement of children

All children have the right to voice their opinions and share their ideas. Children affected by anti-trafficking and safe migration policies and measures have a particular right to be heard in events like the Mekong Children's Forum. This section is about how effectively the MCF process reached the right groups of children, given time constraints and other challenges.

- 6) The Mekong Children's Forum process involved an appropriate mix of children.

National forum:

I strongly disagree I disagree I agree I strongly agree No opinion/don't know

Sub-regional forum:

I strongly disagree I disagree I agree I strongly agree No opinion/don't know

Comments and suggestions

- 7) How could more children, especially those in the most affected groups, be involved next time?

Child protection and best interests

Because the MCF process actively tried to involve children vulnerable to trafficking and children with past experience of trafficking, the organizers were very careful to develop principles, guidelines and mechanisms to protect participating children, and to ensure these were implemented.

- 8) The policies and guidelines developed for the MCF process were appropriate to protect children's rights and best interests.

I strongly disagree I disagree I agree I strongly agree No opinion/don't know

Comments and suggestions

- 9) During the sub-regional children's forum (including travel to and from the forum), these policies and guidelines were implemented effectively to protect children.

I strongly disagree I disagree I agree I strongly agree No opinion/don't know

Comments and suggestions

- 10) Do you know of any problems encountered by participating children during the sub-regional children's forum (including travel to and from the forum)? Please describe the problems and how they were dealt with? Was this the right way to deal with them?

Workload and support

- 11) How would you describe your workload in the MCF process? If you were both an organizer and an interpreter/chaperone or facilitator, please give separate answers for both of your roles.

- 12) You received adequate and appropriate support, including information (e.g. the Preliminary Guidelines, emails, briefings) to understand and fulfil your roles and responsibilities.

As an organizer

I strongly disagree I disagree I agree I strongly agree No opinion/don't know

As a facilitators or chaperone/interpreter

I strongly disagree I disagree I agree I strongly agree No opinion/don't know

Comments and suggestions

Partnership

The MCF process is part of Voices of Children, a joint advocacy initiative between Save the Children UK and ILO-IPEC. It also drew in several other partners at national and sub-regional levels.

13) Partnership added significant value in the MCF process.

I strongly disagree I disagree I agree I strongly agree No opinion/don't know

What were the most significant benefits and constraints related to partnership?

Benefits	Constraints

Comments and suggestions

The Sub-regional forum

14) The participating children were provided with an enabling environment to share their ideas and experiences freely and without adult manipulation.

I strongly disagree I disagree I agree I strongly agree No opinion/don't know

Comments and suggestions

15) Children had enough timely and appropriate information (information packs, technical input in the forum etc.) to participate meaningfully in the subregional children's forum.

I strongly disagree I disagree I agree I strongly agree No opinion/don't know

Comments and suggestions

16) The event at the UNCC on 15 October (dialogue with senior officials, children's performances, marketplace, press conference, UN briefing etc.) was appropriate and successful overall.

I strongly disagree I disagree I agree I strongly agree No opinion/don't know

Comments and suggestions

17) The presence of a reporter from the Bangkok Post during the forum sessions was appropriate and worthwhile.

I strongly disagree I disagree I agree I strongly agree No opinion/don't know

Comments and suggestions

18) Logistical arrangements and administrative support were well done in the sub-regional forum.

I strongly disagree I disagree I agree I strongly agree No opinion/don't know

Comments and suggested alternatives

19) Do you have any other comments or suggestions related to the sub-regional children's forum?

Measuring against objectives

The MCF process had three overall objectives. In this section please assess how appropriate and effective the MCF process was in view of these objectives.

- 20) The MCF process was an appropriate and effective way to achieve Objective 1: "To demonstrate the value of participatory approaches in the search for sustainable solutions to the problem of trafficking".

I strongly disagree I disagree I agree I strongly agree No opinion/don't know

Comments and suggestions

- 21) The MCF process was an appropriate and effective way to achieve Objective 2: "To provide a venue for children in the sub-region to collectively articulate their perspectives on the issue of trafficking and ill-prepared migration, and share their experiences of participating in anti-trafficking action".

I strongly disagree I disagree I agree I strongly agree No opinion/don't know

Comments and suggestions

- 22) The MCF process was an appropriate and effective way to achieve Objective 3: Facilitating a process for children to contribute to the design of policies and programmes addressing trafficking at the sub-regional level

I strongly disagree I disagree I agree I strongly agree No opinion/don't know

Comments and suggestions

Any other comments or suggestions

Evaluation and Lessons Learned

For the Mekong Children's Forum Process and the Sub-regional Children's Forum

Organizers

Dear Colleagues

We have all had a little time to recover after the Mekong Children's Forum, to catch up on our work, and, I hope, to think about our experiences. Your insights and comments are invaluable in trying to build up a picture of how the Mekong Children's Forum process went and in finding out how we can do it better next time.

This questionnaire will be used to make a short evaluation of the Mekong Children's Forum and the Voices of Children process to date, and to identify suggestions and lessons learned for future children's participation in our work.

HOW TO COMPLETE THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire is designed to be completed on your computer and then emailed back to me at caspar@loxinfo.co.th. Because the questionnaire is to be filled out on a computer, you can make your responses and comments as long as you want.

Many of the "questions" are actually statements. For example:

The policies and guidelines developed for the MCF process were appropriate to protect children's rights and best interests.
 I strongly disagree I disagree I agree I strongly agree No opinion/don't know

Comments and suggestions

You should bold or underline the one response that is closest to your own overall attitude to the statement (for example "disagree" or "agree"). Please bold or underline) "No opinion/don't know" if you have no opinion or are not in a position to answer the question (for example if it refers to a process you were not involved in). You can use the optional "comments and suggestions" space below each statement to explain your response, provide more specific detail, and give suggestions for how it could be done better.

You can use the last section of the questionnaire – "Any other comments or suggestions" – for additional information and comments that you could not find a place for earlier.

All of your responses will be treated in strict confidence – if they are quoted or passed on by me, they will be attributed only to "an organizer".

TERMINOLOGY

In this questionnaire, "Mekong Children's Forum process" (or "MCF process") refers to the entire initiative to date, up to and including the national children's forums and the sub-regional Mekong Children's Forum. "Sub-regional children's forum" refers specifically to the event that took place in Bangkok 11-17 October 2004.

Thank you for your help.

Caspar

QUESTIONNAIRE

Name (optional):

What were roles in the MCF process? (please make bold or underline as appropriate):

- Organizer (at the sub-regional level);
- Organizer (at the national level);
- Facilitator (in the sub-regional forum);
- Chaperone/interpreter (in the sub-regional forum);

Were you involved in the national/provincial children's forum on trafficking in your country?

Yes No

Were you involved in the sub-regional Mekong Children's Forum (11-17 October)?

Yes No

Overall success

1) In your perception, the MCF process was a success overall.

I strongly disagree I disagree I agree I strongly agree No opinion

Advocacy and media

The MCF process was an advocacy initiative that aimed to reach a broad range of people. In the national and subregional children's forums, ministers and/or senior officials involved in anti-trafficking work were invited to a dialogue with the children. Mass media were also important to publicize the children's messages. Other advocacy/communications activities included briefings and personal contacts with partner agencies and a website (www.mekongchildrensforum.com).

2) The children's messages from the national/provincial children's forum in your country, and the value of participatory approaches in anti-trafficking policy-making and planning, were well publicized and promoted through the MCF process

I strongly disagree I disagree I agree I strongly agree No opinion/don't know

Comments and suggestions

3) The children's messages from the sub-regional children's forum, and the value of participatory approaches in anti-trafficking policy-making and planning, were well publicized and promoted through the MCF process.

I strongly disagree I disagree I agree I strongly agree No opinion/don't know

Comments and suggestions

4) Do you know of any anecdotal evidence that the MCF process succeeded in changing attitudes and behaviour related to children's participation in anti-trafficking policy-making and planning – among local, national and sub-regional decision makers; IPEC and SC UK staff; other organizations involved in anti-trafficking work; civil society; communities; children? Please describe it.

5) Media arrangements during the children's forums (informed consent to media contact, restricted contact between journalists and children, adults accompanying children during interviews) were appropriate and successful.

I strongly disagree I disagree I agree I strongly agree No opinion/don't know

Comments and suggestions

Involvement of children

All children have the right to voice their opinions and share their ideas. Children affected by anti-trafficking and safe migration policies and measures have a particular right to be heard in events like the Mekong Children's Forum. This section is about how effectively the MCF process reached the right groups of children, given time constraints and other challenges.

6) The Mekong Children's Forum process overall involved an appropriate mix of children.

I strongly disagree I disagree I agree I strongly agree No opinion/don't know

Comments and suggestions

7) How could more children, especially those in the most affected groups, be involved next time?

Child protection and best interests

Because the MCF process actively tried to involve children vulnerable to trafficking and children with past experience of trafficking, the organizers were very careful to develop principles, guidelines and mechanisms to protect participating children, and to ensure these were implemented.

8) The policies and guidelines developed for the MCF process were appropriate to protect children's rights and best interests.

I strongly disagree I disagree I agree I strongly agree No opinion/don't know

Comments and suggestions

9) During the sub-regional children's forum (including travel to and from the forum), these policies and guidelines were implemented effectively to protect children.

I strongly disagree I disagree I agree I strongly agree No opinion/don't know

Comments and suggestions

10) Do you know of any problems encountered by participating children during the sub-regional children's forum (including travel to and from the forum)? Please describe the problems and how they were dealt with? Was this the right way to deal with them?

Workload and support

11) How would you describe your workload in the MCF process?

12) Adults involved in the MCF process received adequate and appropriate support, including information (e.g. the Preliminary Guidelines, emails, briefings) to understand and fulfil their roles and responsibilities.

I strongly disagree I disagree I agree I strongly agree No opinion/don't know

Comments and suggestions

Partnership

The MCF process is part of Voices of Children, a joint advocacy initiative between Save the Children UK and ILO-IPEC. It also drew in several other partners at national and sub-regional levels.

13) Partnership added significant value in the MCF process.

I strongly disagree I disagree I agree I strongly agree No opinion/don't know

What were the most significant benefits and constraints related to partnership?

Benefits	Constraints

Comments and suggestions

The Sub-regional forum

- 14) The participating children were provided with an enabling environment to share their ideas and experiences freely and without adult manipulation.

I strongly disagree I disagree I agree I strongly agree No opinion/don't know

Comments and suggestions

- 15) Children had enough timely and appropriate information (information packs, technical input in the forum etc.) to participate meaningfully in the subregional children's forum.

I strongly disagree I disagree I agree I strongly agree No opinion/don't know

Comments and suggestions

- 16) The event at the UNCC on 15 October (dialogue with senior officials, children's performances, marketplace, press conference, UN briefing etc.) was appropriate and successful overall.

I strongly disagree I disagree I agree I strongly agree No opinion/don't know

Comments and suggestions

- 17) The presence of a reporter from the Bangkok Post during the forum sessions was appropriate and worthwhile.

I strongly disagree I disagree I agree I strongly agree No opinion/don't know

Comments and suggestions

- 18) Logistical arrangements and administrative support were well done in the sub-regional forum.

I strongly disagree I disagree I agree I strongly agree No opinion/don't know

Comments and suggested alternatives

- 19) Do you have any other comments or suggestions related to the sub-regional children's forum?

Measuring against Objectives

The MCF process had three overall objectives. In this section please assess how appropriate and effective the MCF process was in view of these objectives.

- 20) The MCF process was an appropriate and effective way to achieve Objective 1: "To demonstrate the value of participatory approaches in the search for sustainable solutions to the problem of trafficking".

I strongly disagree I disagree I agree I strongly agree No opinion/don't know

Comments and suggestions

- 21) The MCF process was an appropriate and effective way to achieve Objective 2: "To provide a venue for children in the sub-region to collectively articulate their perspectives on the issue of trafficking and ill-prepared migration, and share their experiences of participating in anti-trafficking action".

I strongly disagree I disagree I agree I strongly agree No opinion/don't know

Comments and suggestions

- 22) The MCF process was an appropriate and effective way to achieve Objective 3: Facilitating a process for children to contribute to the design of policies and programmes addressing trafficking at the sub-regional level

I strongly disagree I disagree I agree I strongly agree No opinion/don't know

Comments and suggestions

Any other comments or suggestions

Evaluation Questionnaire

On the Mekong Children's Forum Process for Senior Officials

Dear [NAME OF SENIOR OFFICIAL]

We are currently evaluating the process and outcomes of the sub-regional Mekong Children's Forum as well as the national/provincial children's forums that led up to it, which were co-organized by the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour of the International Labour Organization (ILO-IPEC) and Save the Children UK.

As you took the time to meet with the children and discuss their recommendations and on human trafficking, your perspectives on the Mekong Children's Forum process would be invaluable to us. Your help in filling out this evaluation questionnaire would be very much appreciated.

This evaluation will be used for internal planning purposes only and will not be quoted in any report.

Please return the completed form by 26 November 2004, to:
Caspar Trimmer, Consultant, Voices of Children
e-mail: caspar@loxinfo.co.th

For any enquiries, please contact Caspar Trimmer, at: caspar@loxinfo.co.th or telephone: +(66) 9 152 7319

ILO-IPEC and SC UK would like to extend their sincere gratitude for your help with our evaluation.

Yours truly

Thetis Mangahas, Programme Manager, ILO-IPEC Mekong Project to Combat Trafficking in Children and Women

Mark Capaldi, Regional Coordinator, SC UK Southeast and East Asia and Pacific Regional Office

Mekong Children's Forum Process Overview

Between August and October 2004, ILO-IPEC and SC UK co-organized a series of children's forums in five countries of the Greater Mekong Sub-region: Cambodia, PRC China (Guangxi and Yunnan provinces), Lao PDR, Thailand (northern provinces), and Viet Nam.

In these forums, children discussed their ideas and perspectives on the issue of human trafficking and labour migration, and shared their experiences of anti-trafficking work. Most of the children came from areas of high vulnerability to trafficking. A substantial number had firsthand experiences of trafficking, migration or labour exploitation.

In each of these forums, children defined an "Agenda for Action" on human trafficking in their country and presented it in a dialogue with officials. ILO-IPEC and SC UK also sought to publicize the forums and children's messages through the mass media and through other channels.

Following on from these national/provincial forums, 25 children, elected by their peers in the earlier forums, journeyed to Bangkok, Thailand for the sub-regional Mekong Children's Forum. During four days, they shared the outcomes of the forums in their countries, and heard messages from other vulnerable children in the sub-region, along with technical input and practical advice from ILO-IPEC, SC UK and the UN Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking in the Greater Mekong Sub-region.

The highlight of the forum came on 15 October, when the children visited the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok to present a common set of “Mekong Children’s Recommendations on Human Trafficking” and to ask senior officials and heads of UN agencies from around the Greater Mekong Subregion how they would help to ensure that these Recommendations are put into practice.

“The MCF process” refers to the entire process leading up to, and beyond, the sub-regional children’s forum that took place in Bangkok on October 11-17 2004 (including the national children’s forums).

QUESTIONNAIRE

Name (optional):

Position (optional):

Country/ies you are responsible for:

General questions

1) In your perception, how successful was the MCF process overall?

Please highlight the most appropriate answer below.

Highly unsuccessful Unsuccessful No opinion/don’t know Successful Highly successful

2) How well do you think the MCF process achieved its objective of facilitating a process for children to contribute to the design of policies and programmes addressing trafficking at the sub-regional level?

Please highlight the most appropriate answer below and give any additional comments, reasons for your answer, and suggestions for the future in the space below.

Very poorly Poorly No opinion/don’t know Well Very well

Comments, reasons and suggestions

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3) How has your experience of the MCF process affected your attitude and planned action regarding children’s participation in seeking solutions to human trafficking?

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Advocacy

- 4) Please indicate all of the ways in which you heard about the Mekong Children's Forum and the national/provincial forum in your country (before and after the forum). Please list only those that you remember right now, without checking.

	Details	National/provincial or sub-regional forum?	Before or after the forum?
Direct contact from ILO-IPEC or SC UK	What kind of contact? (Briefing, e-mail, telephone?)		
Other development agencies (UN, NGOs etc.)	Which agencies?		
Conversation with your colleagues			
Television/radio	Channel/programme?		
Newspapers	Newspaper name?		
Website	Website name/address		

- 5) Some of our key target audiences for advocacy were:

- a) Ministers and senior officials (central and provincial levels) with responsibilities linked to anti-trafficking policy and programming;
- b) UN and non-governmental agencies involved in anti-trafficking work;
- c) Adults and children in vulnerable communities in the region.

How successful do you think we have been in reaching these audiences with information about the MCF process, and especially the children's messages? Do you have any suggestions for further advocacy work to reach these groups?

- a) Ministers and senior officials

Please highlight the most appropriate answer below and give any additional comments, reasons for your answer, and suggestions for the future in the space below.

Unsuccessful Not very successful No opinion/don't know Successful Very successful

Comments, reasons and suggestions

b) UN and other agencies

Please highlight the most appropriate answer below and give any additional comments, reasons for your answer, and suggestions for the future in the space below.

Unsuccessful Not very successful No opinion/don't know Successful Very successful

Comments, reasons and suggestions

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c) Adults and children in vulnerable communities

Please highlight the most appropriate answer below and give any additional comments, reasons for your answer, and suggestions for the future in the space below.

Unsuccessful Not very successful No opinion/don't know Successful Very successful

Comments, reasons and suggestions

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6) What are your impressions of the Dialogues between Children and Senior Officials that you attended, and the surrounding events?

b) Dialogue at national/provincial forum

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b) Dialogue at the sub-regional forum (UNCC, 15 October 2004)

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Other questions

7) All children have the right to voice their opinions and share their ideas. Children affected by anti-trafficking and safe migration policies and measures have a particular right to be heard in events like the Mekong Children's Forum. Do you think the Mekong Children's Forum process overall involved an appropriate mix of children?

• _____

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- 8) The MCF process is part of Voices of Children, a joint advocacy initiative between Save the Children UK and ILO-IPEC. It also drew in several other partners at national and sub-regional levels. Do you think this partnership aspect added value in the MCF process?

Please highlight the most appropriate answer below and give any additional comments, reasons for your answer, and suggestions for the future in the space below.

A disadvantage No opinion/don't know No value added Value added Much value added

Comments, reasons and suggestions

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Any other comments or suggestions related to the Mekong Children's Forum process?

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