Combating Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation of Children and Youth in the Greater Mekong Subregion: Achievements & Lessons Learned
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# Introduction

The present report assesses the outcomes and impact of the ESCAP programme on combating sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and youth in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS), implemented by the Health and Development Section (formerly HRD Section\(^1\)) from 1998 to mid-2003. The programme has been supported by a wide range of donors, including the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the United National Inter-agency Project on Trafficking of Women and Children in the Mekong Sub-Region (UNIAP), the United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the International Labour Organization’s International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour Mekong Sub-Regional Programme to Combat Trafficking in Women and Children (ILO-IPEC TICW).\(^2\) In addition, funds from the Government of Japan and the Government of Australia, while mostly earmarked for the South Asia/Philippines programme component, have also benefited this subregional programme (see programme activities below).

ESCAP’s regional programme to combat sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and youth began in pursuance of Commission resolution 53/4 on the “Elimination of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and youth in Asia and the Pacific”, which was adopted in April 1997. While a total of 12 countries from two subregions (the Greater Mekong Subregion and South Asia/Philippines) participated in the regional programme, this report focuses its attention on the Greater Mekong Subregion component. An evaluation of the South Asia/Philippines programme was prepared in May 2002.

The GMS component of the ESCAP programme was implemented during the first four phases (1998-2001) with the Section for International Maternal and Child Health (IMCH), Uppsala University, Sweden. A “Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances” (CEDC) Expert from Uppsala University, funded by the Government of Sweden, worked with ESCAP on project implementation from 1998 to 2001.\(^3\)

The purpose of this evaluation report is to review the achievements of the ESCAP programme, and the lessons learned from its implementation. It is not intended to be used as a formal, external evaluation, but rather has been written by ESCAP staff members in order to share experiences and noteworthy achievements.

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\(^{1}\) The Human Resources Development (HRD) Section officially became the Health and Development Section (HDS) in October 2002. For the purposes of this report, HDS will be used.

\(^{2}\) ILO-IPEC TICW did not contribute funds directly to ESCAP, but supported participants and trainers for the joint subregional training course in November 2001.

\(^{3}\) For the purposes of this report, activities undertaken by the CEDC Expert are not distinguished from activities undertaken by ESCAP staff members and consultants. For more detailed information, see Sida progress and terminal reports.
Section I “Programme background” provides an overview of the programme objectives and activities. Section II “Programme implementation: achievements and lessons learned”, reviews the process of programme implementation and the realization of produced outputs. Section III “Programme impact: achievements and lessons learned”, assesses the impact and achievements of the programme using qualitative information, including progress reports on pilot projects and training course implementation from national counterpart organizations (NCOs) from throughout the programme. Finally, Section IV “Conclusions and recommendations” draws upon the achievements and challenges in programme implementation, and offers recommendations for future related ESCAP interventions.

This report draws upon previous project progress and terminal reports, as well as the evaluation report from the South Asia/Philippines programme component (see Appendix A for references). The national counterpart organizations are listed in Appendix B.
I. Programme Background

a. The sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and youth in the GMS

   i. Sexual abuse

   Sexual abuse of children and youth, which occurs within the family, school, work or public places, is a global problem which is just beginning to receive public attention in the region. Sexual abuse includes, but is not limited to, rape and incest.

   All children are vulnerable to sexual abuse. Young people are most at risk from those living with them, related to them or acquainted with them, such as parents, step-parents, uncles and aunts, older siblings, neighbours and caretakers.

   Among the causes of abuse are gender and age discrimination; family problems which are related to economic, social, and cultural aspects of family relationships; family disintegration due to extreme stress and other ills; and excessive drug and alcohol use which leads to maltreatment of children.

   Sexually abused children experience both physical and psychiatric problems such as occasional colds, peptic ulcers, motion sickness, frequent headaches, malnutrition, bedwetting, nail-biting, obesity, hair fallout, epilepsy, pregnancy, STDs, abortion, fear, anxiety, depression, anger, post-trauma syndrome, and attempted suicide. Female victims of abuse also risk becoming pregnant.

   ii. Sexual exploitation

   The sexual exploitation of children and youth is of growing concern around the world. The problem is particularly acute in the developing countries of Asia and in other areas undergoing rapid socio-economic change. Sexual exploitation includes, but is not limited to, prostitution, trafficking and pornography.

   Children and youth may be kidnapped, sold by members of their family, or tricked by brothel owners or procurers with promises of legitimate employment, then finding themselves in exploitative situations. Some children run away from difficult and abusive home situations and end up in sex work as their only means of earning a living, which procurers and brothel owners’ exploit. Still others find themselves coerced into the sex industry with threats of violence and persuaded by lies. Lack of

\footnote{For detailed information about the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and youth in the GMS, including health problems and available services, see Sexually abused and sexually exploited children and youth in the Greater Mekong Subregion: A qualitative assessment of their health needs and available services (ESCAP, 2000).}
safe migration channels and limited employment opportunities contribute to the risk.

The sex industry has become a multi-billion dollar global industry. Sexual exploitation of children and youth is a profitable part of it. Local demand and sex tourism keep the demand high, while lax law enforcement further perpetuates the problem.

Children who have been victims of sexual exploitation suffer severe mental and physical trauma. Physically, children are at high risk of contracting STIs, such as HIV/AIDS. Other physical problems children encounter include poor nutrition and hygiene. Psychosocial problems include feelings of low self-esteem, severe guilt and suicidal tendencies. In many cases substance abuse prevails. Despite this dire situation, there is a severe lack of health and social services for victims of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation.

b. Programme objectives

At the fifty-third session of the Commission, a resolution on the “Elimination of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and youth in Asia and the Pacific” (ESCAP Resolution 53/4) was tabled by the Government of the Philippines. This resolution, which was subsequently adopted by the member governments of ESCAP, requested the Secretariat to undertake research and to provide training to social service and health personnel, and promote awareness of the issue in the Asia-Pacific region. Due to the hidden nature of the problem, the difficulty in making an accurate assessment of the magnitude of the problem was noted. However, reports from various organizations and agencies gave one common message: that the problem was serious and needed to be urgently addressed.

In pursuance of the resolution, HDS implemented from 1998 to mid-2003 a subregional programme in the GMS, with funding support from a consortium of donors: Sida, UNODC, UNIAP, UNAIDS, UNFPA and ILO-IPEC TICW, as well as the Government of Japan. Activities were undertaken in the six participating countries, namely, Cambodia, China (Yunnan Province), Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam. From 1998 through mid-2003, five phases of activities were implemented.

Victims and potential victims of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation are in great need of health and social services. Social development personnel play a critical role in the prevention as well as recovery and reintegration of these victims into society. They are in direct touch with this group through the provision of services such as education and health care and are, therefore, in a position to address the specific

5 The number of member and associate member countries and areas of ESCAP was 60 in 1997.
6 Related programme activities are still on-going. See page 13 for more details.
needs of the target group. The programme thus focused its attention mainly on developing the capabilities of social development personnel\(^7\) to improve their service delivery. Additional programme components were added later, which focused on increasing government commitment to implementing the Yokohama Global Commitment.\(^8\)

The programme had the following nine immediate objectives:

1. To determine the current status of sexually abused and sexually exploited children and youth in the GMS.
2. To explore the range of social services available to sexually abused and sexually exploited children and youth and the capacities and potential of different agencies in providing those services.
3. To sensitize and promote awareness and networking among government personnel and other members of civil society, including youth NGOs and the private sector, about the situation of sexually abused and exploited children and youth, with a view to supporting policies and programmes to improve access to relevant social services, education and training as well as employment.
4. To develop a gender-sensitive HRD training curriculum for social development personnel to enhance their capabilities in facilitating the reintegration of young victims and potential victims of sexual abuse and exploitation in society.
5. To strengthen the capacity of national institutions, both governmental and NGO, to prevent as well as address the specific needs of child and youth victims of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation, including more effective provision of health and social services, through training of key social service and health personnel.
6. To support the implementation of a series of pilot projects at the national/community level that aim to improve the access of sexually abused and sexually exploited children and youth to relevant health and social services, as well as educational and training opportunities.
7. To build the capacity of key national personnel to serve as national resource teams to prevent as well as address the specific health and psychosocial needs of child and youth victims of sexual abuse (rape and incest) and sexual exploitation (prostitution, trafficking and pornography), including more effective provision of health and social services.
8. To analyse, document and disseminate successful approaches by both government and NGOs in the areas of prevention, protection, reintegration

\(^7\) Health and social service personnel are defined broadly, and include staff at government and NGO shelter homes, drop-in centres and health clinics, as well as teachers and police.

\(^8\) See page 12 of this report for more information.
and physical/psychosocial recovery of child and young victims of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation, for further replication by the participating countries.

(9) To promote inter-country exchange of national experiences and networking among governments and NGOs in Asia on measures to address sexual abuse (rape and incest) and sexual exploitation (prostitution, trafficking and pornography) of children and young women and men.

c. Overview of programme activities

This section provides a brief overview of programme activities.9

**PHASE I (1998)**

**Research on the status of sexually abused and sexually exploited children**

In Phase I, research on the status of sexually abused and sexually exploited children and youth, and available services for the victims, was conducted. Research teams from the participating countries were trained in the research methodology. The teams consulted existing literature on related issues and undertook qualitative research through interviews with sexually abused and sexually exploited children in selected provinces. Follow-up training to the research teams on data analysis and report writing was then provided, and six national level studies were prepared.

**Database of reference materials and directory of organizations**

In addition, information on existing reference materials/literature related to sexual abuse and sexual exploitation was gathered and a database was constructed. A directory of existing organizations and available services to young victims was also developed.

**Regional intergovernmental meeting**

A regional intergovernmental meeting, which was participated in by senior officials responsible for youth, was held to raise awareness on these issues. The special theme of the meeting was the elimination of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and youth. A panel discussion, moderated by Prof. Vitt Muntarbhorn, General Rapporteur of the Stockholm World Congress Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, focused on challenges of prevention and protection from victimization. A film depicting the status of sexually abused and sexually exploited children and youth in the Subregion, entitled “No is Not Enough” was also developed and shown.

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9 For more detailed information on programme activities, see the progress and terminal reports listed in Appendix A.
PHASE II (1999)

National HRD workshops
In Phase II, six national HRD workshops were convened: (1) to sensitize and promote awareness and networking among government personnel and other members of civil society, including NGOs and the private sector, about the situation of sexually abused and sexually exploited youth through dissemination of the research results conducted under Phase I; and (2) to identify the training needs of health and social service providers in preparation for the development of training materials.

Development of training curriculum and regional synthesis report
Development of the training curriculum and preparation of the training materials, including teaching manuals and teaching aids, was also undertaken. A subregional synthesis report of the six country-level studies was drafted and printed.

Pilot research projects at grass-roots level
Selected research recommendations were implemented through grassroots level pilot projects:

- **Cambodia:** Providing at-risk communities with education on sexual exploitation, substance abuse and HIV/AIDS. Twelve training courses were conducted on topics such as child rights, sexual exploitation, substance abuse, HIV/AIDS and trafficking networks, for local authorities and community members.

- **China:** Protecting the rights of children and preventing substance abuse. An exhibition on protecting child rights and preventing HIV/AIDS and substance abuse was developed and held in four sites in Yunnan Province. 4,000 brochures were also developed and disseminated to young people.

- **Lao PDR:** Awareness-raising on sexual exploitation, substance abuse and HIV/AIDS. IEC materials were developed for radio and television, and brochures and storybooks were produced, focusing on the risks of illegal migration to Thailand, including sexual exploitation and substance abuse.

- **Myanmar:** Awareness creation on child exploitation and substance abuse. Awareness-raising activities were conducted for local authorities, health and social service personnel, community elders, parents and teachers on child-related laws, preventing sexual abuse and sexual exploitation and substance abuse, and the consequences of exploitation and abuse.

- **Thailand:** Capacity-building of community networks on preventing sexual abuse and sexual exploitation, substance abuse and HIV/AIDS. Two-day workshops were
held in Udon Thani and Phuket provinces for health and social service personnel on creating child protection networks, offering effective rehabilitation services and encouraging action at the community level.

- **Viet Nam: Awareness creation on sexual abuse and sexual exploitation, substance abuse and HIV/AIDS.** A project on education and awareness-raising was conducted on laws related to sexual abuse and sexual exploitation, as well as prevention of substance abuse and HIV/AIDS. Many awareness-raising activities were held in the target sites, using educators and the mass media


**Subregional Course on Psychosocial and Medical Services for Sexually Abused and Sexually Exploited Children and Youth**

In Phase III, the subregional “ESCAP Course on Psychosocial and Medical Services for Sexually Abused and Sexually Exploited Children and Youth” was held in Pattaya and Bangkok, Thailand, from 8 to 28 September 2000 for health and social service providers from the Greater Mekong Subregion. Materials developed during Phase II were pilot tested. Thirty health and social service providers (five from each of the six GMS countries) attended the three-week course.

The primary objective of the course was to provide participants with basic knowledge of the medical and psychosocial needs and problems of children/youth in especially difficult circumstances (CEDC) in general, and sexually abused and sexually exploited children/youth in particular, and promote skills in the design, management and evaluation of services that adequately address them. A secondary objective, inherent in the first one, was to provide participants with basic knowledge of research methods to carry out simple health-related situational analyses of sexually abused and sexually exploited children/youth. The course also addressed the challenge of combining preventive and remedial measures in a manner that will stimulate teamwork between medical, psychological and social caregivers.

Course topics included the following:

- Child Health and Survival;
- Child Growth and Development;
- Substance Abuse and its Relation to Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation of Children;
- HIV/AIDS and its Relation to Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation of Children;
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- Social Context of CEDC;
- Preventive and Remedial Actions for Sexually Abused and Sexually Exploited Children.
Exploited Children;

- Project Planning, Management and Evaluation; and
- Individual Project Planning, Implementation and Evaluation.

**PHASE IV (2001)**

**National pilot projects**

In Phase IV, pilot projects were implemented, which had been developed during the subregional training course. Local consultants were hired to assist the country teams in project planning, monitoring and evaluation, in addition to continuous monitoring support from ESCAP. The pilot projects, which focused on awareness raising at the community level, were as follows:\(^{10}\):

- **Cambodia**: *A community approach to reintegration of sexually exploited children in Cambodia*. Two-day workshops, which focused on issues of reintegrating sexually exploited children, were held in two provinces for 26 commune chiefs, six local authorities and six relevant GO/NGOs. The trainees replicated the workshops at the local level with village chiefs and teachers, who in turn worked with villagers and school children to increase sensitivity towards sexually exploited children.

- **China**: *Promoting self-protection, awareness and capacity of children and adolescents*. Following a situational analysis of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children, training handbooks for the self-protection of children and youth were prepared. 120 children and youth and 120 parents were then trained in children’s self-protection, and community child-protection networks were established.

- **Lao PDR**: *Promoting the rights of Lao children through information and care*. A one-day advocacy meeting was held with representatives of different ministries. Two training workshops were organized, one for teachers, and the other for medical personnel.

- **Thailand**: *Promoting the dignity of Thai children*. Two training courses were held in two provinces, in which 100 teachers were trained on child rights, and self-protection of children and youth against sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. The teachers then worked with their students, parents, community members and local leaders to raise awareness of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children/youth.

- **Viet Nam**: *Promoting community-based information, education, communication (IEC) approaches in the prevention of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children.*

\(^{10}\) Myanmar did not participate in this phase of the programme. For further explanation, see section II of this report, as well as the Sida 2001 terminal report.
Training documents were developed, and two training courses on child rights and combating sexual abuse and sexual exploitation were held for a total of 50 community members. IEC materials were developed and distributed, and awareness-raising activities were carried out by commune and ward cadres, targeting vulnerable children, victims of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation, school children, community members and local authorities.

**Finalization of course training guide**

During 2001, the course training guide, which had been developed during previous phases, and piloted at the course in September 2000, was finalized. The *ESCAP Course on Psychosocial and Medical Services for Sexually Abused and Sexually Exploited Children and Youth* training guide has seven modules, as follows:

1. Social Context of Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances (CEDC)
2. Child Health and Development
3. Health Effects of Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation
4. Special Health Concerns (Substance Abuse and HIV/AIDS)
5. Assessment and Treatment Issues
6. Remedial Actions
7. Care for the Careproviders

**Evaluation seminars**

Lastly, at the end of this phase, evaluation seminars were held in five countries (all GMS countries except Myanmar), in order to review pilot project implementation, identify pilot project achievements and constraints, and propose how the achievements could be further strengthened beyond the pilot project phase.

**PHASE V (OCTOBER 2001-APRIL 2003)**

**Subregional training and national-level courses**

In Phase V, ESCAP continued its subregional training, and national-level courses were held in all six countries. The “ESCAP Training of Trainers Course on Psychosocial and Medical Services for Sexually Abused and Sexually Exploited Children and Youth in the Greater Mekong Subregion” was co-organized in cooperation with ILO-IPEC TICW and UNIAP from 12 to 17 November 2001 in Bangkok. Funding for participant travel and course trainers was provided by ILO-IPEC TICW. ESCAP and ILO-IPEC TICW identified participants for the course, through consultations with ESCAP national counterpart organizations and ILO-IPEC TICW national project coordinators. Course participants were from Cambodia, China (Yunnan Province), Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam. Myanmar was not invited to participate, due to ILO policy.

Efforts were made to link local partners with each other, in order to form
national resource teams and ensure linkages in project implementation. These teams included participants from the September 2000 ESCAP course. The subregional training course focused on:

- Health Effects of Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation;
- Assessment and Treatment Issues;
- Remedial Actions;
- Training of Trainers;
- Networking and Project Development.

In follow-up to this subregional course, participants, in their role as country resource teams, implemented national-level courses. In Myanmar, which did not participate in the subregional course, a separate course was held. The ESCAP Course on Psychosocial and Medical Services for Sexually Abused and Sexually Exploited Children and Youth in the Greater Mekong Subregion training guide was used, with translation into local languages prior to the courses. Some details of the national-level courses include:

- In Cambodia, the NGO Coalition to Address Sexual Exploitation of Children in Cambodia (COSECOM) formed an Advisory Group of relevant NGOs and UN agencies to develop a longer-term training programme for 2003-2004. Working together with Social Services of Cambodia (SSC), Green Gate Center (GGC), and Transcultural Psychosocial Organization (TPO), a “Counselling Training and Coaching Programme for staff of Organizations Managing Shelters for Children who have been Sexually Exploited” is currently being finalized for commencement in June 2003. Prior to the longer-term course, four one-day courses were held in Battambang Province and Phnom Penh between December and February 2003. This project will continue post-ESCAP funding.

- In China, the All-China Youth Federation conducted a course from 15 to 21 February 2003 in Yunnan Province, in close collaboration with the Yunnan Provincial Youth Federation and the Yunnan Academy of Social Sciences. Participants were from relevant organizations or department, such as schools, hospital and clinic staff members, police, Kunming protection centres, and the Yunnan Public Security Bureau.

- In Lao PDR, the Department of Social Welfare conducted a course from 24 to 28 February 2003 in Vientiane, with ESCAP resource persons. The ESCAP course was held in conjunction with a similar-themed UNICEF course, thereby avoiding overlap and allowing for maximum use of resources. The course curriculum was thus expanded to include techniques for child-friendly investigations, medico-legal examinations and child-friendly referral procedures.

- In Myanmar, a “Training of Trainers” course was held from 18 to 22 November
2002 in Yangon, organized by the Department of Social Welfare, with ESCAP resource persons. Participants came from many different agencies and organizations. Participants are currently using their new skills to conduct township-level trainings, which will be completed by June 2003.

- In Thailand, the National Youth Bureau organized a course from 25 August to 1 September 2002 for 25 health and social service providers from five key provinces. At the end of the course, participants from three provinces developed follow-up plans, and are currently implementing projects, having secured their own funding.

- In Viet Nam, the Department of Social Evils Prevention (DSEP) organized a course in Khanh Hoa province (site of a previous ESCAP pilot project) for 30 social workers and doctors from the Treatment and Rehabilitation Centres and provincial Women’s Union. Previous participants from the ESCAP subregional training courses served as trainers.

**PHASE V-a (OCTOBER 2001-APRIL 2003)**

Another component of the programme, which has been implemented since 2001 by HDS, focused on the promotion and implementation of regional and global commitments to combat sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and youth.

**East Asia and Pacific Regional Consultation for the 2nd World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children**

ESCAP was invited by UNICEF EAPRO (East Asia and the Pacific Principal Regional Office) and ECPAT International to co-organize the East Asia and Pacific Regional Consultation for the 2nd World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, held at the United Nations Conference Centre, Bangkok from 16 to 18 October 2001. The Regional Consultation was held as a preparatory meeting for the 2nd World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (with supplemental funding to ESCAP by the Government of Japan). There were over 250 participants from 20 countries (including all GMS countries except Myanmar).

The objectives of the Regional Consultation were to review progress in meeting the commitments set out in the Declaration and Agenda for Action adopted at the Stockholm Congress (1996); share regional “good practices”; and adopt a Regional Commitment and Action Plan. The Action Plan adopted by the countries of East Asia and the Pacific requested “ESCAP and UNICEF to monitor the implementation of the Agenda for Action, with assistance from ECPAT International’s existing services of data collection and analysis.” The East Asia and Pacific Regional Consultation was considered by UNICEF and ECPAT International to be the most successful of the six
Regional Consultations held worldwide.

For the Regional Consultation, a publication entitled “Asia-Pacific Answers: Good practices in combating commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth” was developed by an inter-agency group (publication funded by UNIAP). The ESCAP training course was highlighted in the publication, as well the work of several NCOs. In addition, one of the workshops during the Regional Consultation focused on “recovery and reintegration”. During this workshop, ESCAP staff members gave a presentation on the ESCAP programme.

**Regional Workshop, 2nd World Congress**

Furthermore, ESCAP co-organized a Regional Workshop for East Asia and the Pacific on Regional Strategies and Partnership at the Congress, in collaboration with UNICEF EAPRO and ECPAT International at the 2nd World Congress. At the Congress, ESCAP also disseminated approximately 700 copies of the publication on “Good Practices in combating sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and youth in Asia”, which highlighted the work of NCOs in the Greater Mekong Subregion (Cambodia and Thailand), South Asia and the Philippines, as well as ESCAP’s training course (publication funded by the Government of Japan).

**Development of regional monitoring mechanism**

Based on this successful collaboration, ESCAP continued the Inter-agency Group with UNICEF and ECPAT International to develop regional mechanisms to monitor implementation of the Regional Commitment and Action Plan (as requested by governments at the Regional Consultation), as well as the Stockholm Agenda for Action (adopted at the 1st World Congress, Stockholm). Ten action plans from the Regional Commitment were chosen for monitoring, and indicators were developed for a database entitled CSEC Info.

In March 2003, a Regional Workshop on Monitoring the East Asia and Pacific Regional Commitment and Action Plan against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children was held in cooperation with UNICEF and ECPAT International. All GMS countries except Myanmar participated, in addition to other selected countries from South-East Asia and the Pacific. The objectives of the Regional Workshop were to: 1) Review a set of draft monitoring indicators for the East Asia and the Pacific Region; 2) Share country experiences and discuss issues related to the establishment of effective country-level monitoring mechanisms on CSEC; and 3) Finalize and adopt monitoring indicators. The directory of organizations, which was compiled under Phase I of this project, is also currently being updated.

**ON-GOING ACTIVITIES**

With continued funding from the Government of Japan, programme activities

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11 As post-Workshop activities are still being undertaken, this set of activities is not assessed in this report.
are continuing into a next phase (to begin mid-2003), and are expected to continue to end-2005. While activities in this phase will not be specifically implemented for the GMS, it is anticipated that at least some GMS countries will be included. Activities will centre on the provision of technical assistance to national organizations in response to expression of interest for capacity development in the two areas in which ESCAP has been working:

- Training of health and psychosocial service providers to better address the health needs of young victim, using the “ESCAP Course on Psychosocial and Medical Services for Sexually Abused and Sexually Exploited Children and Youth”;

- Development of country-level indicators and mechanisms to monitor progress in combating the sexual exploitation of children and youth.

d. Summary of programme outputs

As can be seen from above, the programme produced all of the intended outputs, as follows:

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<td>1) Studies to promote awareness of the situation of sexually abused and sexually exploited children and youth</td>
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<td>2) A film to raise awareness of the situation of sexually abused and sexually exploited youth in the GMS</td>
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<td>3) A panel discussion during the Asia-Pacific Intergovernmental Meeting of Senior Officials Responsible for Youth</td>
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<td>4) A directory with profiles of organizations providing social and health services to sexually abused and exploited youth in the GMS</td>
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<td>5) A bibliography of grey and published materials on sexually abused and exploited children and youth</td>
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<th>Phase II</th>
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<td>6) Six national training needs assessment workshops</td>
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<td>7) Pilot projects in selected communities on awareness raising and education on substance abuse issues among sexually abused and sexually exploited children and youth</td>
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<th>Phases III - Va</th>
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<td>8) Delivery of the “ESCAP Course on Psychosocial and Medical Services for Sexually Abused and Sexually Exploited Children and Youth” at the subregional and national</td>
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II. Programme Implementation: Achievements and Lessons Learned

As can be seen above, this programme successfully realized all the intended outputs. This section looks at the processes and approaches that were used during programme implementation. Key features of implementation are highlighted.

a. Solid analysis builds effective interventions

Achievements

• Solid research makes for better interventions. During the first phase of the programme, the research teams consulted existing literature on related issues and undertook qualitative research through interviews with sexually abused and sexually exploited children in selected provinces in the respective countries. These national level research studies were crucial components of the programme, as they formed a sound basis for future interventions.

A total of 84 sexually abused children and 176 sexually exploited children (27 of whom had a history of sexual abuse) were interviewed. The often-new findings from the research showed that young victims of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation suffer from serious physical and psychosocial health conditions but that the available health and social services are grossly inadequate. The findings from the research were therefore essential in the development of relevant and effective pilot projects and training materials. The reports also served as useful tools in raising awareness and promoting action at the national level.

The research conducted indicated that, in most countries, substance abuse and HIV/AIDS were key health problems and/or health risks sexually abused and sexually exploited children faced. Based directly on these research outcomes, additional funds were mobilized to address substance abuse and HIV/AIDS in future programme interventions.

• Research methodology is key. ESCAP spent considerable time developing the qualitative research methodology and research protocol. The research teams were trained in sampling and data collection methods. This was essential in order to gather relevant information, and to ensure that the rights of the interviewed children were respected.

12 For more information on the research methodology and findings, see Sexually abused and sexually exploited children and youth in the Greater Mekong Subregion: A qualitative assessment of their health needs and available services (ESCAP, 2000).
Research can be motivating. For many of the NCOs, the research was the first time they were exposed to the problems of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. Understanding the issue at a first-hand level motivated them to continue this work.

Linking research to action ensures appropriate and relevant interventions. The research conducted was not an end unto itself. The findings from the research were shared at country-level workshops. At these workshops, health and social service personnel also assessed their training needs and developed pilot projects, based on the research results. As such, a direct link was established between the research findings, the training needs of national personnel, and the implementation of interventions. This crucial link allowed for more effective interventions based on the real situation.

The research also led to the development of a directory of organizations providing services to sexually abused and sexually exploited children/youth. A database of reference materials was developed and uploaded onto the Internet. The research reports were consolidated into a subregional report for easy reference.

Lessons learned

- On-going training in research methodologies and data analysis must be provided. This was the first time (in 1998) that many of the NCOs conducted research on the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children/youth. In some countries, research institutions were sub-contracted to conduct the research, in order to provide support to the NCO. Substantial time was spent by ESCAP in providing technical support in the conduct of research and report writing.

- The conduct of research, particularly of a sensitive nature, takes time. For some of the governments, the existence of child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation had not even been openly accepted when the research first began. Thus, some governments were initially reluctant to nominate any government counterpart for the conduct of the research. ESCAP spent considerable time working with government counterparts to gain approval for the research.

b. National-level coordination is vital

Achievements

- National-level coordination among stakeholders is key. The programme focus successfully included promoting a multi-sectoral approach to combating sexual
abuse and sexual exploitation of children/youth. Partnerships are vital to tackling the complex problems faced by young victims of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation.

The national workshops convened under Phase II successfully brought together national stakeholders from various sectors, including concerned governmental ministries and NGOs, as well as United Nations and other international organizations.

“In the pilot project (2000-2001), different government departments collaborated to ensure effective project implementation with a multisectoral approach. This included the departments of public health, justice, and women, children and youth, as well as the administrative department in the target communities. Mass organizations, such as the China Youth League and Yunnan Women’s Federation, among others, as well as research institute, university and hospital staff were involved at various stages of the project.” (China)

To get further information…the district schools collaborated with the health sector and mass organizations, who already had experience running projects against trafficking, child labour and drug abuse. Coordination among diverse local community groups was good.” (Lao PDR)

- Organizations benefit from close cooperation and division of work assignments. Working with partner agencies can maximize resources, and allow for important in-country exchange of experiences. In particular, the programme’s emphasis on government-NGO collaboration enabled different stakeholders to work together and learn from each other’s experiences. The subregional and national courses further allowed participants from all sectors to have the opportunity to get to know each other and share experiences. This collaboration proved key in the implementation of pilot projects.

“Coordination of Department of Social Welfare and Department of Formal Education and other relevant ministries (Public Health, Justice, etc.) with diverse local community groups was undertaken in a satisfactory manner.” (Lao PDR)

“The roles of NGOs and international organizations, such as ESCAP, are very meaningful. Good cooperation from them has been of great help.” (Thailand)

“There was assignment [of work] and close co-operation between project implementing agencies at various levels to promote the strengths of each.” Various contributions (both financial and in-kind, such as staff hours) by partners in the pilot projects supported project implementation. Partnerships were particularly helpful in bringing together relevant areas of expertise (e.g., law, psychology, medicine), since dealing with issues of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation was a new endeavour in most countries”. (Viet Nam)

**Lessons learned**

- Government-NGO collaboration can be difficult. Trust and willingness are key factors to ensuring such collaboration.
• **Account for time required for government processes.** Official processes (such as obtaining approval for activities or securing government participation) tend to take longer than with NGOs and community-based organizations. Sufficient time should be allocated in the planning and implementation of projects.

• **Linkages should be made between national and provincial levels.** In addition to linkages between national-level agencies and organizations, it is important to allow for collaborative ties to be built between national and provincial/community levels. Future programmes should place added emphasis on this aspect.

c. **Regional/subregional programme aspects add value**

**Achievements**

• **This programme has gained considerably from being part of the overall ESCAP regional programme.** Complementary activities undertaken in South Asia and the Philippines, as well as with other South-East Asian and Pacific Island countries added value to the project, through exchange of information, materials and ideas. This contributed to not only increased impact of the programme activities, but also to the cost-effectiveness of implementation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Results from the training needs assessments conducted in Phase II of the programme from both the GMS as well as South Asia/Philippines were analyzed, for use in the development of training materials. In addition, the course training guide was meaningfully enhanced through the field-testing of training materials in Nepal in July 2000, as well as implementation of national-level courses in South Asia and the Philippines in 2001.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The East Asia and the Pacific Regional Consultation for the Second World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (October 2001, Bangkok) reaffirmed the political commitment of the governments in the region to combating sexual exploitation of children. The exchange of experiences and “good practices” among the participants were facilitated through workshops held throughout the Consultation.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

• **Funding from a donor consortium has enabled ESCAP to implement value-added activities.** The use of different donors to fund parts of the programme allowed the programme to maintain flexibility and respond to emerging needs that arose during its implementation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNAIDS and UNODC funded modules on the relationship between HIV/AIDS and sexual exploitation and substance abuse and sexual exploitation respectively, which significantly enhanced the ESCAP Course on Psychosocial and Medical Services for Sexually Abused and Sexually Exploited Children and Youth.</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Through the parallel project sponsored by the Governments of Japan and Australia, ESCAP’s work</td>
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in this field was documented in a publication on “good practices”, which was disseminated widely at the Yokohama Congress, as well as throughout Asia.

The UNIAP funds secured by ESCAP significantly added to the programme’s sustainability through their use in augmenting the printing of the training guide and for implementation of national-level courses in 2002.

• The NCOs can benefit from subregional exchange of experiences. At the two subregional training courses, participants were able to exchange information, ideas and techniques on service provision for sexually abused and sexually exploited children and youth. They were also able to share cultural concerns, and ways of overcoming constraints in culturally appropriate methods. This exchange among countries provided crucial information to participating countries, where, in some cases, the amount of information and resources available for combating sexual abuse and sexual exploitation was limited. Indeed, the participants from the subregional training courses expressed a desire to form a subregional network to further share information and experiences, noting the benefit to their national-level projects.

The course is very useful and helps us to strengthen our capacity through sharing experiences with other countries.” Some participants expressed an interest in ESCAP supporting a sub-regional network. (ESCAP Course in Pattaya, 2000, feedback)

Participants indicated that the course modules and the opportunity to share experiences with fellow participants helped broaden their knowledge of sexual exploitation in this region. (ESCAP/ILO Course feedback)

Networking was mentioned by over 20% of the participants as one of the most relevant aspects of the course to their work, and some 18% said they would use the skills gained in the course to establish and strengthen networks in their countries. (ESCAP/ILO Course feedback)

• A subregional programme can help to mitigate sensitive issues. When the programme first began, many governments were reluctant to admit to the existence of sexual abuse and/or sexual exploitation. However, being part of a subregional programme encouraged countries to participate, by allaying concerns that they were being singled out for scrutiny, and through promotion of “friendly competition” and countries “not wanting to miss out.”

Lessons learned

• Inter-country exchange requires time and money. Resources are needed in order for countries to be able to learn from other countries, and replicate/adapt good practices. Programmes may want to consider including inter-country field visits, to allow for more in-depth review.
d. Inter-agency collaboration can accomplish a great deal

Achievements

• The programme has successfully made many linkages. In addition to the collaborative linkages that ESCAP has established with donors (including UN agencies), ESCAP has been successful in linking up with other United Nations agencies as well as governments and NGOs at the regional and national levels to maximize the impact and sustainability of the programme.

  ESCAP has been an active member, since 1999, of the United Nations Working Group on Trafficking in Women and Children, which meets quarterly. Through ESCAP's participation in this group, increased attention has been given to the need for strengthened health and social services for sexually exploited children/youth. Other United Nations agencies and NGOs have approached ESCAP to share information and resources in this area.

• The linkages extend to South Asia as well. In South Asia, ILO-IPEC and Ray of Hope (an NGO) have actively sought ESCAP's contributions in the development of the training materials, and have used the ESCAP course training guide as a resource.

• Inter-agency collaboration is cost-effective and maximizes impact. Sexual abuse and sexual exploitation are multifaceted issues which require multiple and diverse approaches. As such, no one agency can attack these issues on their own. The programme's real efforts to form substantive collaborative ties have benefited programme activities and ESCAP as a whole. The joint work has allowed ESCAP's programme to reach a wider audience and has increased the impact of interventions.

  One example of successful collaboration has been between ESCAP and ILO-IPEC TICW. Collaboration began with each organization recognizing the other's niche area through a Memorandum of Understanding. A subregional training course was co-organized in November 2001 (see activities above), and ILO-IPEC TICW has assisted ESCAP at the national level in forging new partnerships and organizing courses.

• ESCAP is now recognized as a key player in its niche areas. ESCAP’s regional programme to combat sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and youth in Asia is now internationally recognized. In addition, as stated in Section I, the Action Plan adopted by the countries of East Asia and the Pacific t he Regional Consultation requests “ESCAP and UNICEF to monitor the implementation of the Agenda for Action, with assistance from ECPAT International’s existing services of data collection and analysis.” This has further cemented ESCAP’s key role in
regional efforts to combat sexual exploitation of children.

The launch, as well as the research findings, of the ESCAP subregional studies (2000) on “The status of sexually abused and sexually exploited children and youth: a qualitative assessment of their health needs and available services in South Asia and the Greater Mekong Subregion” received substantial regional and international mass media coverage.

For the Regional Consultation, an inter-agency group collaborated to produce the publication on “Asia-Pacific Answers: Good practices in combating commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth”. The agencies selected the good practices, which included the ESCAP course. The publication was distributed at the Regional Consultation as well as the Yokohama Congress. At the 2nd World Congress Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Youth, attended by three ESCAP staff members, including the Deputy Executive Secretary, ESCAP co-organized a Regional Workshop for East Asia and the Pacific on Regional Strategies and Partnership at the Congress, in collaboration with UNICEF and ECPAT International. The Regional Workshop was well attended and the participants reaffirmed their commitment to implement the Regional Commitment and Action Plan. ESCAP also disseminated approximately 700 copies of the publication on “Good Practices in combating sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and youth in Asia”.

- Inter-agency collaboration is crucial for the sustainability of national-level interventions. At the national level, ESCAP has been working closely with ILO-IPEC TICW, UNIAP and UNICEF country offices in the organization and conduct of courses. This collaboration has helped to maximize ESCAP’s impact at the national and community levels, through sharing of resources and information.

  In Cambodia, UNICEF and UNIAP are part of the Advisory Committee established by the NCO, and are working with ESCAP and international and national NGOs to establish a long-term training course, using the ESCAP course training guide.

  In Lao PDR, the ESCAP course was held in conjunction with a UNICEF course, to allow for a greater range of topics to be covered, as well as cost sharing of equipment and resources. The UNICEF Lao PDR trainer had also worked as the ESCAP course trainer, adding further continuity.

  In Myanmar, ESCAP worked with UNICEF and UNIAP from the onset of course preparations, to ensure non-duplication of efforts. A UNIAP staff member acted as a valuable resource person during the course.

- Sharing of training materials avoids duplication and promotes goodwill. ESCAP has provided UNICEF, UNIAP, ILO-IPEC TICW, and numerous NGOs with many copies of the course training guide. In most countries, UNICEF and ILO-IPEC TICW country offices have been active in distributing the training guide, and in providing ESCAP with valuable feedback. This has also been a cost-effective way to distribute the training guide, and an effective way to ensure its wide dissemination.
ILO-IPEC TICW has included the ESCAP course training guide as one of their Technical Intervention Areas, which focus on practical working tools in project implementation. This collaboration has allowed for the ESCAP training guide to reach a wider audience.

Lessons learned

- **Collaboration works best when people know each other.** In the GMS, many staff members working in this field have known each other for years. This has greatly facilitated the good collaboration.

- **Collaboration at the national level requires more effort, but is worth it.** For the ESCAP programme, the linkages with other agencies at the national level have added considerable value to the programme. Country offices may be in a better position to provide on-going support to national organizations and agencies, due to their proximity. ESCAP can also benefit from the working relationship that country offices may already have with the various stakeholders at the national level. Future programmes should continue to strengthen these ties with UN country offices.

- **It is important to have a niche area.** Having a niche area facilitates collaboration with other agencies that have different comparative advantages. Staff members should be given the time to build up expertise in functional areas.
III. Programme Impact: Achievements and Lessons Learned

All of the objectives were fully realized under this programme. Rather than look at each objective individually, this section highlights key elements of programme impact (including the fulfilment of objectives) and reviews lessons learned.

a. Strengthened human resource capabilities of health and social service personnel

Achievements

- **Social service and health personnel have gained knowledge and skills in service provision.** This programme has greatly enhanced the capacity of national personnel (both government and NGO) to assist young victims of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation, and to prevent sexual abuse and sexual exploitation at the national and local levels.

Through their attendance at the two subregional training courses, and national-level courses, participants gained knowledge about the psychosocial and medical problems facing sexually abused and sexually exploited children and youth. In addition, the courses enhanced the participants’ knowledge and skills in design, management and evaluation of different types of services for these young people, as well as children at-risk of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. The participants acquired better understanding of the need for youth-friendly services, and methods by which to ensure child/youth participation in the development and implementation of programmes, which would lead to their increased effectiveness in timely prevention and intervention measures.

The courses also gave participants an understanding of how to bring together preventive and remedial measures in a way that would overcome existing professional barriers, and would encourage medical, psychological and social caregivers to work as a team. The courses were taught in a participatory manner, which encouraged participants to share their experiences, and learn from others.

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13 For more information on the course evaluation, see the Course report.
sexually exploited children/youth ‘completely’ or ‘substantially’; 26 out of 27 replied that they felt ‘very comfortable’ or ‘comfortable’ implementing follow-up projects. (Myanmar Training of Trainers Course Evaluation)

“Participants gained more skills on CSEC, assessment and treatment issues, remedial actions, facilitation techniques, and development of national/local action plans. The most useful aspects of this course were assessment and treatment issues, and development of national/local action plans.” (Myanmar)

“For the participants, the most useful thing about the course was that they were provided with knowledge on national advocacy, measures, laws and policies against CSA/CSE, as well as the assessment and counselling skills, and especially they were trained on how to develop a project proposal so that they can apply it for their own provinces.” (Viet Nam)

• The national courses inspired participants to use their new skills. In addition to learning new skills, the courses were conducted in such a way as to motivate participants to use their new abilities upon completion of the course. Participants were encouraged to develop action plans for sharing new information with their colleagues, as well as form national and local-level networks.

“Participants will use their skills introduced during the course through distributing their knowledge and skills to others all over the countries.” (Myanmar)

“The participants felt that they have understood the nature, the seriousness and the importance of the problem. They also said that after the course they felt more equipped to help the victims. What’s more, they felt eager to share the new insights with others at home.” (Thailand)

“During the course, participants themselves made pilot projects in line with their site’s context. In addition to having their capacity strengthened, the participants could also interact and learn experiences of other provinces.” (Viet Nam)

• Follow-up projects after training courses have ensured use, and further development, of new skills. Through implementation of pilot projects or national-level courses after the subregional training courses, the skills of social service and health personnel were further developed. This allowed participants to share their experience, knowledge and skills with other colleagues and community members. Furthermore, through the implementation of these follow-up projects and national-level courses, ESCAP was able to monitor the effectiveness of the training.

“The preparation of training materials was a very useful exercise in strengthening the team members’ skills in materials development. It also increased the project team’s knowledge of the various topics. The project team’s training skills were sharpened by their experience in preparing for, and conducting, the training sessions for parents, community members and children.” (China)
“The pilot project was a new experience of the local level people involved. The teachers and medical personnel that participated in the pilot project became better able to explain sexual abuse and sexual exploitation to others in the community.” (Lao PDR)

“All the knowledge and skills trained in the course and the materials will be applied in sexual abuse/sexual exploitation preventative affairs especially in IEC activities in provinces.” (Viet Nam)

- **New skills have contributed to improved services for children and youth.** Sexually abused and sexually exploited children and youth, as well as those at-risk, have benefited in the countries from the improved skills of health and social service providers.

  Since the pilot project began, medical personnel have started to record all cases of suspected sexual abuse. (Lao PDR)

  “The participants will use their knowledge learned during the course for sexually abused and sexually exploited children and youth in the area of rehabilitation.” (Myanmar)

- **The training materials are relevant and useful.** The process of development of the ESCAP Course on Psychosocial and Medical Services for Sexually Abused and Sexually Exploited Children and Youth was lengthy. However, through the conduct of training needs assessments and the pilot testing of training materials at the subregional training course in 2000, quality materials were produced. Substantial efforts were made to ensure that the training guide met the needs of the NCOs and the course participants. The knowledge and skills that participants gained from the training guide were practical and relevant, and in direct response to their needs.

  John Frederick, in his review of training materials on psychosocial care for sexually abused and sexually exploited children in South Asia14, noted the following:

  “Comments: The relatively sophisticated training course is particularly useful to project managers and planners, as well as case management team members and facility managers. The course is equally concerned with medical and psychosocial services for survivors of CSA [child sexual abuse] and CSEC [commercial sexual exploitation of children]. The course provides a strong background in child health and the social context of CSA and CSEC, with functional applications to local and cultural contexts. The materials emphasize skills for project planning and management rather than counselling or direct interventions. While lacking a full presentation of routine case management procedures, the training course provides comprehensive background with which to mobilize multi-disciplinary support networks essential to case management. The materials are unique among those reviewed in their extensive training in child and community needs assessment with which to plan interventions, establish facilities, mobilize support networks, etc. A comprehensive

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14 Although Mr Frederick reviewed the materials for the South Asian context, the training materials are the same as those used in the GMS. Thus, similar conclusions about the materials can be drawn (although not about the capacity of care providers).
For the subregional course held in 2000, the sessions were considered ‘completely’ or ‘substantially’ useful to most of the participant’s work and/or country. The majority also found the individual sessions to have been ‘completely’ or ‘substantially’ relevant to the overall purpose of the course. In terms of the overall evaluation of the course, 29 of 30 participants ranked the overall quality of the course as ‘excellent’ or ‘good’. Similarly, 29 of 30 participants ranked the course content and course methodology as ‘excellent’ or ‘good.’ The quality of trainers was ranked as ‘excellent’ or ‘good’ by all aside from two participants. The quality of documentation was ranked as ‘excellent’ or ‘good’ by all aside from one.

The training guide was received positively at the national level. It was particularly noted for its comprehensive nature, and easy to understand format.

26 out of 27 participants rated the documentation for the course as ‘excellent’ or ‘good’. (Myanmar)

“The training materials, both those actually presented by the respective resource persons and the documents specifically prepared for the course… were said to be extremely relevant and useful.” (Thailand)

“100% of the participants thought that the trained issues are useful and necessary for their work. They said that they have participated in a number of training courses on different topics. However, this is the best one, both at accommodation, method of delivering lectures and group discussion.” (Viet Nam)

“The set of training materials was evaluated to be nice in appearance and rich in content. All lecturers were necessary and suitable to the title of the training course and to meet participants’ training wishes. The materials also met the contents that DSEP wanted to deliver to its local staff.” (Viet Nam)

**Lessons learned**

- **Increasing knowledge and skills is a long-term process.** Capacity building requires a substantial investment (financial and human resources) and should be viewed as a long-term strategy, not a once over. This approach is essential to achieving long-term benefits.

- **Greater focus on training of trainers may be necessary.** In most participating countries, people who can function as trainers are scarce. Furthermore, participatory

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training approaches are often new to participants. It thus may be necessary to provide more training of trainers’ techniques, including teaching simulation, to allow trainees to practice their new skills, and better share new skills with their colleagues.

- **Make sure that the right participants are trained.** It is important to ensure that the right participants attend training courses, and careful selection should be undertaken. Not only should the prospective participant’s interest and skills be ascertained, but also their potential for affecting change and implementing follow-up activities. This can be difficult when English-language skills are required for training courses.

- **In the long run, extended training courses are necessary for some participants.** While the ESCAP course and course training guide provided participants with sound knowledge and skills on the provision of psychosocial and medical services, in the long term, some participants should be encouraged to partake in more extensive courses, which include hands-on experience and training, in order to be able to appropriately counsel sexually abused and sexually exploited children. This is an area where ESCAP may wish to collaborate with other organizations in the future.

### b. National-level networks established

**Achievements**

- **Strategic networks have been established among different national stakeholders working to combat sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and youth.** This programme has strengthened national-level networking among government agencies, civil society organizations and United Nations agencies. Through the conduct of the workshops and pilot project implementation, the NCOs were able to further augment their collaboration with other government agencies and NGOs working in this field.

In many cases, the workshops held in 1999 were the first time that government and non-governmental agencies sat together for three days to brainstorm about solutions to the problems of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and youth. The workshops thus led to the establishment of networking arrangements among government agencies, research institutes and NGOs.

In Cambodia, three participants from previous ESCAP courses (Ministry of Health and World Vision) have joined the Advisory Council, which also includes representatives from key international NGOs, local NGOs, hospitals and UN agencies. This group meets regularly to plan the longer-term training course.

“Inter-agency collaboration was fostered at the national level, involving government authorities at
different levels (e.g., provincial authorities, commune chiefs and village chiefs), members of the national teams that attended the Pattaya training course, and NGOs.” (Cambodia)

“There was increased understanding of the importance of social work and the need to work towards a multidisciplinary response to this issue. Inter-province sharing of experiences and the initiation of networking among education and local authorities and teachers on this issue were made possible through the pilot project.” (Lao PDR)

• The training courses successfully built strategic national teams. The subregional and national-level courses all emphasized the need for participants to work together as national resource teams, to implement projects and train other social service and health providers. The need for a multi-disciplinary approach to service provision (as well as prevention programmes) was highlighted, including government-NGO collaboration. This emphasis inspired participants from diverse backgrounds (e.g., government officials, NGO shelter managers, physicians, police) to form collaborative relationships for the implementation of future projects, thus ensuring greater impact at the national level. Indeed, after the subregional courses, participants implemented national-level pilot projects and course as a team. This further cemented the relationships.

“The most useful aspects of this course were assessment and treatment issues, and development of national/local action plans.” (Myanmar)

“The participants bonded together as friends. They would keep in touch and provide mutual encouragement. Some groups (especially Mahasarakham) planned to launch a brand new NGO in order to work on the problem. They have made contacts with the Provincial Administrative Organization for financial support. Initial reactions were positive.” (Thailand)

• Networks have been built at the community level as well. The strong involvement of community members in the pilot projects enhanced local-level networks, particularly with local authorities whose commitment is necessary for project impact. The involvement of medical doctors and other health care personnel and hospitals in pilot project implementation successfully raised their awareness of the need for the rehabilitation and reintegration of child victims of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation.

“There was good collaboration between local authorities and community members in the implementation of the pilot projects (2000-2001).” (Cambodia)

“In the pilot project (2000-2001), the local project implementation team involved both members of mass organizations and representatives of the local government, such as the Deputy-Chairman of the commune/ward.” (Viet Nam)

Lessons learned
A multi-disciplinary team approach requires commitment and resources. The training courses and other activities successfully promoted multi-disciplinary approaches, and course participants often pledged to work together as teams. Future programmes should consider allocating resources in order to strengthen these teams, and ensure more effective collaboration.

c. Increased awareness and attitude change among communities

Achievements

Pilot project implementation significantly increased awareness among many stakeholders at the community level. Activities raised awareness among children, parents, communities and local authorities on preventing sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and youth, and contributed to changes in attitudes towards vulnerable children and victims of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. In addition, further knowledge was provided on HIV/AIDS, substance abuse and other related topics.

“Children’s awareness was raised about their rights, as well as issues including HIV/AIDS and substance abuse. Parenting skills were enhanced, particularly in the area of sex education. Community members’ knowledge was increased through training activities at a local cultural centre, focusing on sexual abuse and sexual exploitation, and child-protection networks were established in the villages. A Chinese language training guide was developed and finalized using the experiences gained in pilot project implementation.” (China)

“Awareness was raised among community members, including doctors, teachers and parents, on child rights and sexual exploitation of children. Community members’ skills were enhanced in project planning and implementation. Medical doctors realized the need to play a leadership role in addressing sexual abuse and sexual exploitation cases.” (Lao PDR)

“Children, parents and teachers’ awareness was raised on the need for children to develop comprehensive self-protection skills. Teachers and authorities’ knowledge was enhanced on the important of including such skills in the school curriculum.” (Thailand)

“The pilot project highlighted drug abuse as an insidious factor in the vulnerability of school children to sexual abuse and sexual exploitation, and the need for positive avenues through skills-oriented extra-curricular activities that would foster self-esteem and confidence.” (Thailand)

The communities took ownership of the pilot projects. The pilot projects involved many community members, which contributed to their success. The close involvement of local government authorities and village leaders was a crucial element of project implementation, and noted by the NCOs as a key element to building the ownership and sustainability of community-level activities on the sensitive issue
of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. These motivated some communities to take further action towards protecting their children and reintegrating victims into the communities.

“The pilot project provided a welcome opportunity for rural community leaders and members, as well as sexually exploited children, to discuss the issues and consider solutions. A child-protection network was established in the villages, and a reduction in the number of sexually exploited children in the pilot project area has been reported. Community members also report less discrimination and greater acceptance of rescued children, with better understanding of their needs.” (Cambodia)

“Mass organizations & social organizations in the pilot sites have been mobilized to actively participate in the activities. The cadres of these organizations encouraged their members to participate in public educational sessions, and afterwards, they became the key propagandists on information, preventive measures against child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation, and on the rights of the child. This created a strong movement in the community.” (Viet Nam)

“After participating in the awareness-raising activities, communities were motivated to set up child protection networks in the villages. The network allows villagers and local authorities to consult each other on how best to protect at-risk children and victims of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation.” (Cambodia)

“Community leaders’ involvement in protecting children was heightened.” (Thailand)

Lessons learned

- **IEC materials should be coupled with action.** Experience demonstrates that IEC materials are not an end unto themselves. Rather, they should be linked with community actions, in order to be most effective.

- **Extra efforts need to be taken to ensure that all community voices are heard.** In communities, the most marginalized families may be hard to engage, and are often overlooked. Community projects should be monitored to ensure that all families and community members could benefit from activities.

**d. Increased awareness and desire for action among NGOs and government agencies**

**Achievements**

- **The awareness-raising activities sensitized programme managers and prompted action.** The different programme activities raised awareness about the situation of sexually abused and exploited children and youth. In addition, the activities actively promoted government and NGO actions, to develop and implement
policies and programmes to improve access to relevant health and social services, education and training.

One medium for awareness raising and promoting action was through the conduct of the national workshops. The Workshops provided an opportunity to highlight where the gaps in health and social services exist, and to advocate for more and improved services. This was crucial, as in many countries in the region no specialized services existed at the time to meet the health needs of the victims.

The publication on “Good practices in combating sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and youth in Asia” featured seven case studies highlighting different aspects of successful efforts in combating sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children as follows. It has been widely disseminated, and replication of practices encouraged.

“Village headmen in neighbouring villages were keen to be involved in similar training and to participate in other activities [to raise awareness and to protect children]. Local authorities have increased their vigilance, paying particular attention to at-risk children.” (Cambodia)

“After the NCO conducted the pilot project workshops, 19% of the village headmen who had participated met with their villagers to discuss ways to protect and reintegrate victims of sexual exploitation.” (Cambodia)

“Attitudes were changed, as demonstrated by acceptance and policy change within the community, as well as a change in perceptions that was observed within government departments.” (China)

The country and subregional reports gained a lot of media attention, which helped to raise awareness on the need for urgent action. The national-level research reports contained groundbreaking information on the situation of sexually abused and sexually exploited children and youth. The national workshops, which reviewed the country reports, generated wide international and local media coverage, including newspapers, TV, radio and Internet news services.

As part of the regular activities of ESCAP in collaboration with the United Nations Information Service (UNIS), ESCAP launched the two subregional studies on the Status of Sexually Abused and Sexually Exploited Children and Youth: A Qualitative Assessment of their Health Needs and Available Services in the Greater Mekong Subregion and South Asia on 15 September 2000. The event attracted major media attention, including reporting by the following media outlets:

- **Wire services:** Agence France-Press (AFP), Associated Press (AP), Deutsche Presse-Agentur (DPA), Inter-Press Service (IPS), and United Nations Foundation-UN wire
- **English newspapers:** Bangkok Post, DAWN (Pakistan), The Independent (Bangladesh), The Nation, South China Morning Post (Hong Kong), The Straits Times (Singapore), and UN Pakistan 2000 Newsletter
- **Thai newspapers:** Thai Rath and Matichon (including Naew Na and Daily News) Internet sites: Ananova, BBC, CNN and Yahoo
- **Radio/TV:** BBC World Service (London) and CNBC – three interviews with Mr. Kim Hak-Su, Executive Secretary, and Ms. Nanda Krairiksh of ESCAP; Radio Thailand FM105 and Thai
Lessons learned

- Political and cultural sensitivities can delay and/or constrain programme activities. The programme had to take into consideration the often extremely sensitive nature of addressing sexual abuse and sexual exploitation, particularly in implementing awareness raising activities. Overcoming these constraints may be best done through the forming of solid relationships with counterparts, through being sensitive to potential political and cultural constraints, and by being flexible to country conditions.

In 1999, due to the political sensitivities of the Yunnan Provincial Government during the World Horticultural Exposition (which was held in Kunming, China, from May - October 1999), the provincial-level organizations were reluctant to approve the research report until after the completion of the Exposition. ESCAP agreed to postpone the training needs assessment workshop until December 1999, in order to allow the counterpart organization to secure the proper government approval of all workshop-related documents. The name of the workshop was also changed to a less-sensitive title. By working together with the counterpart organization to find mutually agreeable solutions, a successful workshop was conducted.

Due to political sensitivities surrounding the issues of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation, the Government approval process for the pilot project and subsequent evaluation seminar was delayed in Myanmar, and project activities were not implemented in 2001. ESCAP staff members spent considerable time consulting with the NCO in Myanmar, including through undertaking a mission to Yangon for direct consultations with the Director-General of the Department of Social Welfare. The local consultant assisted in this advocacy process, through continuous consultations with concerned officials, particularly senior policy makers, on the importance of combating sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and youth, towards approval of the pilot project. After much negotiation, a Letter of Agreement was signed in October 2001; however, it was decided to curtail the activities as the programme phase was nearing completion. Based on this successful advocacy, activities were able to successfully resume in 2002, and were all completed effectively.

e. Increased capacity of NCOs

Achievements

- The capacity of the NCOs has been greatly enhanced through the provision of practical skills. This programme has strengthened the capacity of the NCOs in several ways. Through programme activities, NCO staff members have gained knowledge and skills on the provision of health and social services to sexually abused and sexually exploited children and youth. In addition, NCO staff members have learnt project management skills, including project planning, implementation and monitoring, though the technical assistance provided.
Many NCOs commented that the ESCAP course enhanced the capacity of their personnel to help children by teaching the personnel to view the victims’ problems holistically. (ESCAP Good Practices publication)

“The implementers gained experience in conducting training, especially at the grassroots level, and in cooperating with local authorities.” (Cambodia)

“The confidence of the project team members in tackling these sensitive issues, as well as to advocate and provide training at the community level, was boosted.” (China)

- **Successful relationships between ESCAP and the NCOs have been built.** Through the provision of substantive backstopping and monitoring, ESCAP has forged and maintained close, long-term relationships with the NCOs. These relationships are based on mutual trust. This has helped to foster a sense of programme ownership by the NCOs, which will be crucial for programme sustainability.

**Lessons learned**

- **The programme emphasis on capacity building was a key component of its success.** ESCAP staff members spent considerable time building the capacity of the NCOs, through the conduct of training in different areas, including project management, and through the provision of continuous technical backstopping. This emphasis on skills development was a key factor to programme success, particularly in the implementation of national-level activities.

- **Time is needed to build capacity and foster ownership.** In order to build the capacity of national personnel, more time is often needed for implementation than anticipated. Capacity building takes place not only in a training course, but also throughout the various stages of project implementation. Hands-on experience is a necessary and crucial component towards building capacity, and supporting this process takes time.

After the 2000 subregional course, the country teams, apart from Cambodia, decided to develop pilot projects that focused on awareness creation rather than direct services to the victims, as originally anticipated. The country teams made this decision taking into consideration the respective local conditions and their own skill levels. Many of the country teams felt they needed additional training or practice. ESCAP secured funding from UNIAP to support another subregional training course (in collaboration with ILO-IPEC TICW) and for follow-up national-level courses. ESCAP staff members worked closely with the NCOs and other national-level personnel in implementation of their national-level courses, and provided substantive backstopping and technical support. Therefore, with extra time allocated to the programme, and additional funds mobilized, the country teams were able build their capacity to a greater extent to deliver direct services to sexually abused and sexually exploited children and youth.
Continuous monitoring is essential. ESCAP staff members spent a lot of time providing technical backstopping and support to the NCOs in programme activities. This work can be facilitated through continuous monitoring and close contact with the NCOs on a regular basis. Although time consuming, this effort is worth it.

Staff turnover can be a problem. After training government and NGO staff members, they may be reassigned or take new positions. Efforts should be made to ensure that their knowledge and skills is passed on within the organization.

Relationships built on trust require time. This programme has greatly benefited from its long time frame, something many other ESCAP projects do not have. Through multi-year programming, this programme has been able to achieve a much greater impact. Through capacity building and other efforts, a solid relationship between ESCAP and the NCOs has formed; something that does not usually happen in a one-year project.

f. Programme sustainability

Achievements

The focus on capacity building has led to increased programme sustainability and ownership. The core of this programme has been to build the skills of health and social service personnel to prevent as well as address sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children. Through training courses, which included session on “training of trainers”, “networking”, “project management” and “development of action plans”, participants not only gained knowledge and skills in psychosocial and medical services, but also learned how to more effectively implement future projects.

The use of participants from subregional courses as trainers during national-level courses allowed national personnel to further develop their skills and confidence. It also greatly increased the sense of project ownership by counterpart organizations. The course participants were able to share their experiences, knowledge and skills with other colleagues and community members.

The programme has also enabled the NCOs to gain confidence in working on combating sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children. Through its promotion of multi-sectoral partnerships, the programme has enabled NCOs to learn new skills, develop their expertise in areas, and coordinate with other organizations. With ESCAP support, the NCOs have developed ties with other United Nations country-level offices, as well as national/international NGOs. This has enhanced the quality of programme implementation at the national level.
Over 40% of the course participants stated that training of trainers (TOT) component was one of the most relevant aspects of the training course, with 45% indicating their intent to apply the techniques to train others in their work. (ESCAP/ILO-IPEC Training Course Evaluation)

“By applying the training technique from ESCAP’s courses, especially the participatory methods, the trainers created good atmosphere in class. Participants were active to give comments for lectures (95% of them joined in the lessons together with trainers; 90% showed in the evaluation form that they enjoyed group discussion time).” (Viet Nam)

“For DSEP, this training course made a great contribution in promoting capacity of DSEP staff in planning and organizing workshops and training courses. At the same time, through translating, composing, compiling materials as well as directly being trainers, the staff trained by ESCAP before could review the knowledge and apply ESCAP’s technique in training. This made their specialized knowledge be improved.” (Viet Nam)

- Strengthened national-level networking has built the NCOs’ capacities to implement projects in the future, and promoted ownership. One important outcome from this programme has been the strengthening of national-level networking among government agencies, civil society organizations and United Nations agencies. Through pilot projects and national-course implementation, the NCOs were able to further augment their collaboration with other government agencies and NGOs working in this field. This increased collaboration between NGOs and government agencies has been an important factor in the successful realization of project objectives.

“Messages on child rights and CSA/CSE were incorporated in on-going local activities (e.g., regular local administration meetings, annual teacher training workshops, sports & cultural activities, and school lessons). Local authorities and community members agreed to talk about child rights and sexual abuse in each village meeting, and supported the teachers in expanding the project activities to other schools in the district.” (Lao PDR)

“Awareness-raising activities on CSA/CSE prevention were integrated into the regular activities and budgets of mass/social organizations.” (Viet Nam)

- Bringing the different country agencies and organizations together has motivated them. The subregional courses, as well as the Regional Consultation, have enabled the different government agencies and NGOs to learn other country’s approaches and actions. This has been a key motivating factor in promoting government action.

Lessons learned

- Building government commitment is key. In order to achieve long-term effects, and to replicate and/or scale up programme activities, government/political
• Institutionalizing linkages with UN country offices will help ensure sustainability. Formalizing links with UN country offices may help ensure a wider programme impact. UN country offices could provide additional national and provincial-level training courses, allowing for more personnel to be trained, and ensuring appropriate follow-up, including refresher courses.

• The multi-year programming has been essential for sustainability and ownership. For building true capacity of national personnel, and effecting change in people’s knowledge and skills, a longer-term approach is required. This programme has benefited greatly from its five-plus years of implementation, allowing personnel to participate in several programme activities, and use their newly-acquired skills.

• Efforts to build capacity of the NCOs have long-term effects. The skills that the NCOs have gained span beyond provision of psychosocial and medical services. The skills in the conduct of research, project planning and management, training of trainers, etc. will benefit the personnel and organizations in all future activities that they undertake.
IV. Conclusion and Recommendations

As shown in this report, the programme has made important progress in combating sexual abuse and sexual exploitation in the six participating countries, particularly through developing human resources, raising awareness and strengthening networks. The programme has responded directly to the needs of ESCAP member countries, and remained relevant throughout its implementation.

Through programme implementation, ESCAP has gained international recognition for its work in this field. The focus on “recovery and reintegration” through the development and implementation of the “ESCAP Course on Psychosocial and Medical Services for Sexually Abused and Sexually Exploited Children and Youth” has been a niche area for ESCAP. Furthermore, with collaboration of UNICEF and ECPAT International, the programme has also focused on an exciting new area – monitoring the Yokohama Commitment.

This programme has been implemented very much in accordance with the proposed strategic principles and modalities listed in the draft UNESCAP Technical Cooperation Strategy16. Specifically, in line with the strategy, it has been long-term, integrated, multi-disciplinary and catalytic. The programme has greatly benefited from the utilization of ESCAP’s comparative advantages, including emphasis on subregional value-added activities and on inter-agency collaboration. The groundbreaking research and subsequent activities, centred on sensitive, transboundary issues, have focused on both capacity development and policy advocacy. Good practices have been developed to encourage exchange of experiences and standard setting. The programme has also benefited substantially from its multi-year implementation, allowing for a greater flexibility in programme implementation, ensuring an increased impact at the national level, as well as allowing ESCAP staff members to develop expertise and relationships with partner organizations.

The NCOs all expressed their desire to continue to work with ESCAP in this field, indicating the very satisfactory working relationship between the NCOs and ESCAP. Several NCOs, however, expressed concern regarding their own capacity and financial resources to implement training courses or programmes without future ESCAP assistance.

With funding from the Government of Japan, it is anticipated that work to combat sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and youth will continue, based on requests by governments for technical assistance in the two areas: 1) “ESCAP Course on Psychosocial and Medical Services for Sexually Abused and Sexually Exploited Children and Youth”; and 2) Monitoring the Yokohama Commitment.

16 Draft circulated 13 May 2003.
Commitment. It is not known at this moment, however, if this will extend to all countries of the GMS. It could also be possible to include modules from the ESCAP course training guide as part of the ESCAP Training on Human Security (potentially funded in late 2003 or 2004).

Programme staff members have also made substantial efforts to link training courses with UN agencies at the country level, particularly with UNICEF, ILO-IPEC TICW and UNIAP. It is hoped that these linkages will allow for further implementation of the ESCAP course after the withdrawal of ESCAP funding.

The work of the Inter-agency Group on monitoring the Yokohama Commitment will also continue, with ESCAP as a key partner, and some GMS countries may be supported in their efforts to use the monitoring indicators (with financial support from ESCAP or UNICEF country offices). It is noteworthy also that these activities will be expanded to include other South-East Asian, Pacific and South Asian countries.

Given the new mandate of the Health and Development Section, it seems likely that ESCAP’s work to combat sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and youth will be phased out by end-2004 or early 2005. As such, it is recommended that ESCAP continue to solidify, and institutionalize, ties with other UN agencies, for future national and provincial-level course implementation. This will further increase programme sustainability, and ensure an increased pool of trained health and social service providers in the Subregion.

ESCAP may want to explore future programmes on migration and trafficking. In addition to being emerging social issues, the sensitive nature of migration, the multi-disciplinary approaches required, and its subregional/regional aspects make it well-suited to an ESCAP intervention. This work could also draw upon the excellent inter-agency collaboration and relationships with NCOs established in this ESCAP programme.
Appendix A: References

A. ESCAP Project Documents and progress/terminal reports

2. Sida 1a terminal report (1999)
4. Sida 1b NCO pilot project and workshop reports (2000-1)
5. Sida 1b terminal report (2001)
7. UNDCP project document (1999)
8. UNDCP NCO pilot project progress reports (1999)
10. UNAIDS project document (1999)
11. UNAIDS terminal report (2001)
12. Esay IV project document (2001)
14. UNIAP project document (2001)
15. UNIAP progress reports (2003)
16. UNIAP NCO project progress reports (2003)

B. Publications

18. Sexually abused and sexually exploited children and youth in the Greater Mekong Subregion: A qualitative assessment of their health needs and available services (ESCAP, 2000)
19. Good practices in combating sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and youth in Asia (ESCAP, 2001)
20. Asia-Pacific Answers: Good practices in combating commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth (ESCAP, 2001)
21. Regional Commitment and Action Plan of the East Asia and Pacific Region against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (ESCAP, 2001)
23. UNESCAP HRD Course on Psychosocial and Medical Services for Sexually Abused and Sexually Exploited Children and Youth (ESCAP, 2002)
## Appendix B: National Counterpart Organizations (NCOs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Phase I</th>
<th>Phase II</th>
<th>Phase III</th>
<th>Phase IV</th>
<th>Phase V</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>Cambodian Centre for the Protection of Child Rights (CCPCR)</td>
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<td>Same</td>
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<td>NGO Coalition to Address Sexual Exploitation of Children in Cambodia (COSECAM)</td>
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<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>All-China Youth Federation (ACYF) (In collaboration with Yunnan Academy of Social Sciences (YASS) &amp; the Yunnan Youth Federation (YYF))</td>
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<td>Same</td>
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<td>Lao PDR</td>
<td>Department of Social Welfare (DSW), Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MoLSW)</td>
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<td>Same</td>
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<tr>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>Department of Social Welfare (DSW), Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement</td>
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<td>Thailand</td>
<td>National Commission on Women’s Affairs (ONCWA) (in collaboration with Chulalongkorn University)</td>
<td>National Youth Bureau (NYB)</td>
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<td>Viet Nam</td>
<td>Department for Social Evils Prevention (DSEP), Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA)</td>
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