



A GUIDEBOOK FOR YOUNG TRAINERS

The Curriculum on Ecological Child Rights in Mekong Development



Mekong Youth Assembly

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Produced by



Mekong Youth Assembly Project

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To all children of the Mekong River, and to children of all rivers in the world.



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Mekong Youth Assembly (www.mekongyouth.org)



(Photo credit: 'The Golden Triangle – Mekong River, Chiang Saen, Thailand,' by Siriluk Sriprasit.)



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(Photo credit: 'Mekong Youth's Dream for Future Mekong Campaign, 31 March 2016, Chiang Khong, Thailand,' by Mekong Youth Assembly.)

Greetings

We are all like seeds, especially children and young people. When the environment is suitable for the seed to grow, it grows beautifully; but if it lacks nutritious soil, sufficient water and warmth, it might not grow. Both natural and man-made environments are very important as they help us grow and sustain our livelihoods.

However, when a development project takes place in a community, it can have both positive and negative impacts on the people and ecology, where we live. In particular, the group of people who can least protect themselves are the young seeds: the children and young people.

As the result, the concept of ecological child rights (ECR) was originated. ECR focuses on promoting and protecting the physical, mental and spiritual (Bio-Psycho-Social) development of children. Therefore, any development projects, that potentially harm the environment where children are born and grow up, must seriously integrate the ecological child rights into the decision-making process.

The Mekong Youth Assembly (MYA) was founded in 2013; it is a self-organized network of youth from Mekong countries. We unite to fight for greater youth and child rights. We fight for greater participation in all levels of decision-making processes that affect our Mekong River and our environment. Over the past few years, we have conducted many workshops focusing on ECR. The curriculum in your hands is the fruit of the collective experiences of working with hundreds of children and young people in the Mekong Region. This guidebook is for young trainers to conduct ECR workshop for youth. We are pleased to share our experiences with you. We have chosen to present our models and tools in a very similar way to how we conducted at trainings in the Mekong countries. We also look forward to future opportunities to discuss this model from many other cross-cultural perspectives.

Ultimately, we hope to help plant more seeds as for children to become aware of their ECR, and for the children to engage in decision-making that affects their lives on all levels, and to defend our rights to have clean soil, air and water – a safe and secure environment so that the children of today and tomorrow may grow and shine!

Mekong Youth Assembly
April 2017

Words Matter

Child	A person under the age of 18.
Children's rights	Children's rights are human rights and in particular the attention to the special protection and care.
Child participation	Children have the right to freely express their views and have their voices heard. Everyone must facilitate their participation in all matters affecting them within their family, schools, local communities, public services, institutions, government policy, and judicial procedures.
Code of conduct	A set of rules or practices that establish a standard of behavior to be followed by individuals and organizations. A code of conduct defines how individuals should behave towards each other, and towards other organizations and individuals in the community.
Development	A pattern of resource use is to meet both physical and spiritual aspects of human needs. A development project is a private and/or government owned-operation that is meant to fulfill human rights and improve the living condition of the people.
Ecology	The relation of all living organisms (humans, animals, plants, etc.) to one another and to their physical surroundings.
Environment	The surroundings or conditions in which a person, animal, or plant lives or operates. Those surrounding may be natural-made environment (rivers, mountains, forest, etc.) or man-made environment (houses, buildings, bridges, factories, etc.).
Food security	The state of having reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable and nutritious food.
Gender sensitivity	Refers to the aim of understanding and taking account of the societal and cultural factors involved in gender-based diversity in to all aspects and spheres of one's private life and decision-making.
Government Policy	The declared objectives that a government seeks to enact in the interest of national community.
Malnutrition	Lack of proper nutrition caused by not having enough to eat, not eating enough of the right kinds of food, or being unable to use the food that one eats.
Mega development project	Any private or government development projects that gain public attention because of huge impacts on communities, environments, and budget, such as building roads, bridges, power plants, hydropower dams, etc.
Mekong countries	The Mekong river runs from the Tibetan Plateau in China's Yunnan Province through Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, and out to the sea in Vietnam's Delta.
River-based livelihoods	The means of living, earning income, and sustaining cultures that are heavily dependent on riverine resources.



(Photo credit: 'A boy in the fish mouth, the painting used in campaigning for the river rights, the 14th March 2017 International Day of Action for Rivers, Chiang Khong, Thailand,' by Visarut Sankham.)

Introduction to Ecological Child Rights

What is the concept of Ecological Child Rights?

Ecological Child Rights (hereafter ECR) is concerned with the relation of living organisms to one another, and the physical, mental and spiritual surroundings relevant to the rights of children stated in the 1990 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

“Children” refers to all people below the age of 18. They are entitled to all fundamental human rights. These rights, which persist through the physical and mental development of a child, must be promoted and protected. They also include key aspects in lives such as their surrounding environment, cultures, belief practices, dreams and ambitions.



Why do we need ECR?

For the last few decades, we have seen a huge rise in public awareness regarding the causes and effects of man-made environmental degradation. Worldwide, people are experiencing the negative impact of water and food shortages, soil, air and water pollution, and natural disasters.

Children have been much affected by these events, and they must live with the consequences of environmental degradation, while they can least protect themselves. Already, many children, particularly in developing countries, are prevented from growing up in a healthy environment: every year three million children under the age of five die of environment related illnesses.

Children's rights direct the focus of environmental and sustainability policies to the unequal power relations that exist between children and adults, between industrialized and developing countries, and between the rich and poor. For example, in many areas we observe the lack of legal and institutional preconditions required for meeting children's human rights concerning effects from ecological damage in the 21st century.

Hence, ecological child rights in development should include the Ecological Child Rights Protection and Promotion aspects into any development project design, risk and impact assessment, meaningful participation, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and accountability of every development project.

Ecological child rights must be promoted and protected and that will not happen without meaningful participation of children.

How do we sustain ECR?

The voices of children must be taken into account in any policy-making processes that affect their well-being of today and tomorrow. We will be the ones taking the responsibility to take care of our Mother Earth with our future generations.

Source:

terre des hommes "Environmental Child rights", Last modified June 16,2015 (bit.ly/tdhECRpdf).



Curriculum on Ecological Child Rights in Development

This Curriculum on Ecological Child Rights (ECR) in Development is based on actual experiences working with children and youth in the Mekong region. We hope this curriculum will help young leaders to navigate both the concept and the practice in promoting and protecting ecological child rights.

We hope that this curriculum will be a helpful tool for young activists to lead their communities and specifically their fellow youth towards a better understanding of ECR. It is important for all of us to think critically and express our thoughts and experiences on the current situations in order to make our environment and community safe and secure.

It is also very important that all children and young people, including the organizers and trainers, are willing to learn through the stories and thoughts of each other. Expressing ourselves and voicing out our concerns in constructive ways are also essential.

At best, beyond the learning process and critical-thinking training, this ECR curriculum aims for all individual youth and all youth groups to feel inspired and encouraged to work towards the well-being of all the people in their communities, regions, nations, and of our Mother Earth.

Common Goal + Common Practice

This curriculum is suitable for young people aged between 18-25 to conduct an ECR workshop for children aged between 12-18.

The objectives of the curriculum are:

- to learn about ECR; the concept, the actual experiences, and related policy and laws;
- to think critically of ECR in relation to real situations in children's communities and countries;
- to come up with creative ideas to help express their concerns and solutions.

For all trainers and organizers, it is very important to emphasize the common practices of this ECR curriculum to all participants. We hope that the Mekong youth will learn not only from the workshop, but also from each other.

We believe knowledge does not only come from this curriculum or the trainers, but from all of us. This curriculum tries to bring out individual experiences to develop the collective knowledge.

Differences in languages, ethnicities, cultures and experiences highlight the diversity and beauty in our lives, and at the core, we are all equally human. Therefore, we shall respect and support each other throughout the workshop.

Everyone shall listen carefully, give feedback and comment respectfully, and be patient when friends are trying to convey ideas and thoughts in different languages. Be attentive, critical of what you learn, and express your thoughts in a constructive way.

There may be some reasons to change and adjust your activity schedule. Participants may take more time than planned, or emergencies may happen - be calm and be flexible.

A facilitator should be able to decide to skip any activities, add any extra processes or steps, or even pause everything to have a chat with your participants. All aspects of conducting the workshop are decided based on **'the best interests of the children'**.



(Photo credit: 'Where has Mekong seaweed, Kai, been gone?' Youth group gave a speech at the campaign for the river rights – the 14th March 2017 International Day of Action for Rivers, Chiang Khong, Thailand,' by Visarut Sankahm.)

Important notes

Trainers should acknowledge some challenges to the full participation and inclusion of children's voices in a workshop. For instance, in societies and cultures where children are 'spoken for', where their experiences and opinions are not given value or merit, where they are conditioned in authoritarian-style education systems that fail to develop and nurture their critical-thinking skills and confidence as individuals. These experiences can make a participatory-style workshop challenging because it can be very different than what children are used to.

As well as, trainers should be aware of gender-sensitivity within a workshop group. As socialization, gender roles and stereotyping, in some cases girls will be less vocal and active in sharing and speaking out than boys will be. It is the responsibility of the facilitator to be aware of these dynamics in the group, and to consciously work to create equal spaces for boys and girls to be comfortable and confident, and able to fully participate, sometimes through creative ways. Therefore, you may personalize any activity to either make it, more or less active, more or less visual, and more or less verbal –to suit your participants. Be patient, kind, and inspiring for each other.

Moreover, trainers shall not only focus on the output of the workshop, but also provide a safe and secure space for children to express themselves, which includes: before, during and after the workshop. A workshop must be also accessible and inclusive for children from different backgrounds and with disabilities or other special needs. The workshop organizers and trainers must provide sufficient and ethical supports to children to be able to participate meaningfully.

Checklist before kicking off a workshop

Planning the workshop: Please use this Checklist to begin planning a workshop.

#1

- ☐ **Set your objectives** - what do you want to achieve?

For example: To raise awareness about the rights of children in a community; To train children to be able to connect their living condition in their community to the principles and laws relating to human rights; To brainstorm and discuss the concerns of the children; To create an advocacy campaign about ecological child rights. Any strategic objectives will decide how you design the whole workshop.

Objectives:

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#2

- ☐ **Set your intended participants** - who will attend your workshop?

For example: Children aged 12-15 from an affected community near the Mekong River in Chiang Rai province of Thailand; Children aged 15-18 from affected communities in six Mekong Countries; Children aged 12-18 from the Mekong Delta provinces in Vietnam.

Intended participants:

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#3

- ☐ **Agree and set dates**

This depends on the organizers, tentative participants and other available resources. When all involved parties agree to host a workshop, go ahead and set the dates.

Dates:

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#4

- 📄 **Recruit participants and get permission from parents**

There are several approaches to recruiting your participants, such as through an open application and/or your working network nomination. Be sure to also provide the opportunity to children with disabilities. The organizers must set clear criteria for application process.

4.1) An open application can be initiated by disseminating an application announcement via email, uploading on a website, and/or posting on social network sites. This approach is best when you would like to extend the network and partner with some new organizations.

4.2) A nomination process, you may ask your networked organizations at a local or regional level to introduce you to a few candidates to participate in your workshop. This approach is best when you would like to strengthen the partnership with that organization. Any applicants who suit your workshop objectives will be invited to attend the workshop.

All key information such as the names of organizations, the application deadline, the number of participants accepted, and contact details must be given out clearly. After reviewing applications, you may conduct an interview with the candidates either in-person or via online chat apps before making an acceptance offer.

Make sure that you reach out to rural children and indigenous children in remote areas, who have limited access to Internet and communicate in their local languages. The medium of communication you choose should reflect your intended target group.

If you plan to invite participants from other communities and countries, make sure you will be able to provide necessary assistance for learning such as interpreters, transportation, accommodation, etc.

All participants who are younger than 18 must have a signed letter of permission from their parents. See an example of the 'Parent's Permission Letter and Consent' in the Training Materials section.

Notes:

Be sure to provide an equal opportunity for girls and boys to apply and be invited to join a workshop.

Intended participants are.....
.....

- Use an open application?
- Use a nomination process?
- How many participants will be invited to attend the workshop?
- How to reach out to potential applicants and/or candidates?
- Our staff, who will be the key contact for application? And who is responsible to each task?
- When is the application deadline?
- Should we conduct an interview?
- Do we need an interpreter?
- Do we need their parent's permission?
- Etc.

[illegible]

#5

❑ Recruit organizing working group(s)

You should ensure the support which will come within your organization, which kinds of support your organization will be providing. Also, list any tentative organizations that might be interested to work with you or to give support to your workshop both financially or otherwise. Contact these organizations to confirm their engagement. Also, inform your network and partner organizations that you would like to have an equal number of girls and boys to participate the workshop.

Working group list:

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#6

❑ Recruit conference staff/ assistants/ chaperones/ case presenters

List potential positions of who will be doing which tasks before, during, and after the workshop. In the case of conducting a workshop for children, a chaperone is required to accompany children who are your participants. The organizers also must inform and invite any key speakers or case presenters in advance, and confirm their availability.

Team staff:

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#7

❑ Accommodation and/or field trip

The chosen accommodation preferably to be close to nature or have lots of trees. There should be an adult person staying at the same accommodation regarding the gender-sensitivity as well. For a field trip site, it should be a place to learn new concepts about environmental challenges or problems, while also able to capture the importance of nature. The place and its environment must be safe and not too far away from the main workshop location.

The organizer should also consider the accessibility of the training area, accommodation, and the field trip that are friendly to children with disabilities (if applicable). If some of those aspects are not disability-friendly, alternative activities could be designed in advance.

Accommodation details:

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Field trip details:

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#8

Communication

Set the key means and channels of communication among the organizers and the tentative applicants, and later among the participants of the workshop. More importantly, the context of your message throughout recruiting and the workshop itself must be clear, precise and accessible to children and young people.

Communication approach:

- What kinds of media and communication will be using to reach out to intended participants?
- And among the organizers and team staff?

[illegible]

#9

Logistical matters

The participants including the organizers, will be traveling back and forth to the workshop venue, accommodation, and the field trip location. Therefore, the transportation means, duration, safety, management, and cost must be taken into a consideration. Any decision must be based on ‘the best interests of the children’.

Logistics:

[illegible]

#10

 Financial planning:

Determine budget - list all costs and identify sources of funding/ income to cover the following items;

- o Venue rental fee
- o Catering - meals, lunches, drinks and snacks, etc.
- o Workshop stationery and other equipment
- o Translation services (if applicable)
- o Local accommodation
- o Transport means and cost

Notes: The list is by no means very strict, nor is it intended to cover every situation, however, the well-being and safety of children are always your first-priority. Our list is provided to start the thinking process involved in budgeting for a workshop. Each event will have its own circumstances and considerations, vary in terms of scale and scope regarding the objectives and capacity of the host organizers.

Financial arrangement plan details:

[illegible]

#11

☐ Risk assessment and management

Health & Safety

- Provide all participants an emergency contact and all necessary contact information (if applicable - a specific chaperone) to a participant who might be traveling alone from their home to attend the workshop.
- Locate the closest hospital to the accommodation and workshop venue along with a contact detail - making the information well-known to all participants and staff members.
- Ask your participants to inform the organizers about their health background and/or any concerns in a participation registration form regarding food and non-food allergies, trauma-sensitive environment, socio-political sensitivities, etc.

Aftercare

- It's also important to consider any potential long-term consequences for the child, such as bullying or unwanted attention. What are the means to prevent this?
- You might also need to consider what sort of support might be helpful to the child when the workshop has finished.

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#12

☐ Consent:

Informed consent from the child as well as the individual or organization with parental responsibility for the child should always be obtained in advance of working with children in any capacity.

Keep documented evidence of consent. Participants who are 16 and up can sign their own consent form, however, this age depends on the policy of your organization and/or organizations which provide you support.

Notes:

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#13

❏ **Code of understanding:**

All staff members and involved parties must be well prepared for working with children and young people, especially concerning extra protection and careful attention throughout the process as follows.

- Prioritize the safety and wellbeing of the child at all times.
- Create child-friendly approaches and methods as the key guideline for your workshop.
- Ask for parent permission for a child to attend your workshop.
- Never take sole responsibility for a child; if a child needs care, you must alert the parent.
- Never lose sight of the fact that you are with children - behave appropriately and use appropriate language at all times.
- Listen and respect children at all times; don't patronize them.
- Avoid favoritism, and treat children and young people fairly and without prejudice or discrimination.
- Always act within professional boundaries; ensure all contact with children is essential to the workshop.
- Form a Child Protection committee, an agreement, a code of understanding, and monitoring procedure.
- Make sure that the organizing teammates agree and consent to the child protection agreement and the code of understanding.
- The core principles of the code of understanding must base on 'the best interest of the child', do no harm, and non-discriminatory approaches.

#14

❏ **Online safety:**

Children and young people can be particularly vulnerable in online spaces. You must consider online safety as part of your risk assessment, particularly if the workshop has an online element. This includes social-networking sites and online apps.

Remember that most social networks are not intended for children under the age of 13, and therefore you should be very careful when working with this age group.

For participants, younger than 18, their permission to have their faces and personal information appear on social-networking sites or a website is not sufficient. You must seek permission from their parents.

You are obligated to inform your participants and staff members of the online safety principle. Participants who are older than 18, still must be well-informed by the organizers, and they must consent to have their faces and personal information appearing on any social-networking sites and websites.

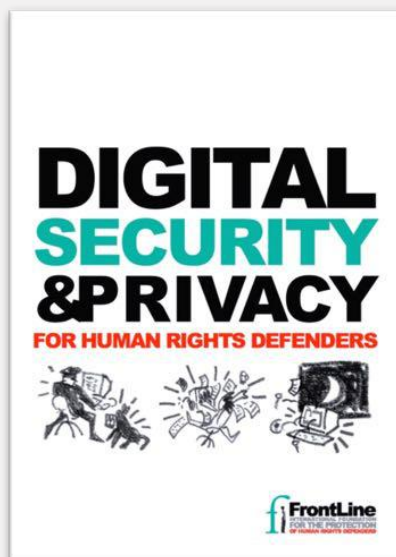
#15

❏ Safety and security

All people involved in organizing your workshop should and continuously communicate with each other before, during, and after the workshop. It is important to clearly address any security and privacy concerns when you work with them, e.g., donors, trainers, team staff, and the workshop participants. A few basic things, that apply to everyone, should be carefully implemented as follows:

- Do not give out your password to anyone to access your computer, laptop, email, etc.
- Try your best to have your computer and/or laptop free of any virus. Often clean your computer and update anti-virus and firewall software.
- Do not work with sensitive information on public computers. Any files opened or any texts read on the Internet can easily be stored for later inspection or abuse.
- Download those important files to review later, on a more secure computer environment. Always backup your information either in the cloud or on a USB stick.
- Do secure your passwords and access to the backups.
- If you access your email and work on public computers in an Internet cafe or a library, do not let the computer save your password and make sure you clear all browsing data and passwords from the search engine.
- Evaluate your surroundings regarding your safety and security, and if any concerns arise, discuss this with the workshop organizer.

It is very important to have a child protection policy and procedures (#11-15) in place before the workshop takes place.



For further and in-depth digital security protection, please see a full version of '*Digital Security & Privacy for Human Rights Defenders*' (by Dmitri Vitaliev, Front Line International Foundation for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, February 2007) which can be downloaded here: bit.ly/digital_security.



Keep these materials at hand!

The below list of materials is very useful to facilitate a workshop. Specifically, they are used for participants to express and organize their thoughts and for trainers to keep activities and discussions on track. Some items depend on the availability and applicability.

Adapt your materials and activities to be more relevant to the age-group of your participants. We recommend that for participant under the age of 15, the trainers may prepare and apply more visual materials and tools for each training activity, which children will be able to understand and learn more effectively.

Crayons/ paints	Drawing/ Lined or color papers	Masking tape	Box cutter	White board
Marker pens	Flipchart papers	Post-it/sticky notes	Scissors	Projector
Ink pens	Flipcharts	Flash cards	Strings	Speakers
Pencils	Hard papers	Name tags	Microphone	Etc.

Intensive 3-Chapter Workshop

Brief info: Welcome to the Mekong Youth Assembly's ECR curriculum! Our 3-Chapter workshop was produced based on our experiences in conducting training for Mekong youths for the past four years. We hope that this curriculum in your hands will be one of the tools to help you learn and develop your own learning process of ecological child rights (ECR). Feel free to adopt and adapt any concepts, ideas, and activities in this curriculum to create your own training courses that are suitable to the youths in your community.

Tree Chapter

“Learning and thinking” - this chapter is for all participants and trainers to get to know each other, and be introduced to ECR. You will also focus on setting up a common ground for those participants who are from different communities, speaking different languages, having different environments and cultures to share.

They will be exchanging their points of view and sharing their stories with other Mekong youths. We call this beginning step ‘nature, you and me, and us’.

Forest Chapter

“Understanding” - this chapter is to step forward and learn more about ECR and relevant development ideas, concepts, and real-world situations. Though ECR can be very broad, this day is to help all participants to contextualize ECR to suit their situations.

For example, what is development? What does development mean to children? Who is involved in development? Which organizations should be involved in promoting and protecting ecological child rights? We call this discovering chapter ‘be inspired and stay engaged’.

River Chapter

“Analyzing and taking action” - this chapter is for Mekong youths to learn how to be critical and part of the solution. They will work on their action plan, design an advocacy plan, and identify objectives, a goal, a campaign message and target audience.

They will also learn to assess the risk within a campaign. In this case, it depends on the organizers whether the participants will have a chance to take an action based on their campaigning plan (but it is recommended). We call this transforming ideas to action step, the river chapter.’

Evaluation and follow-up

Organizers and trainers are obligated to ask all participants to provide feedback (non-anonymously and anonymously), and everyone helps evaluate the whole workshop as well as the advocacy campaign.

The trainers may contact the participants after the workshop to ask them whether or to what extent, they have applied the workshop content into their activism work.

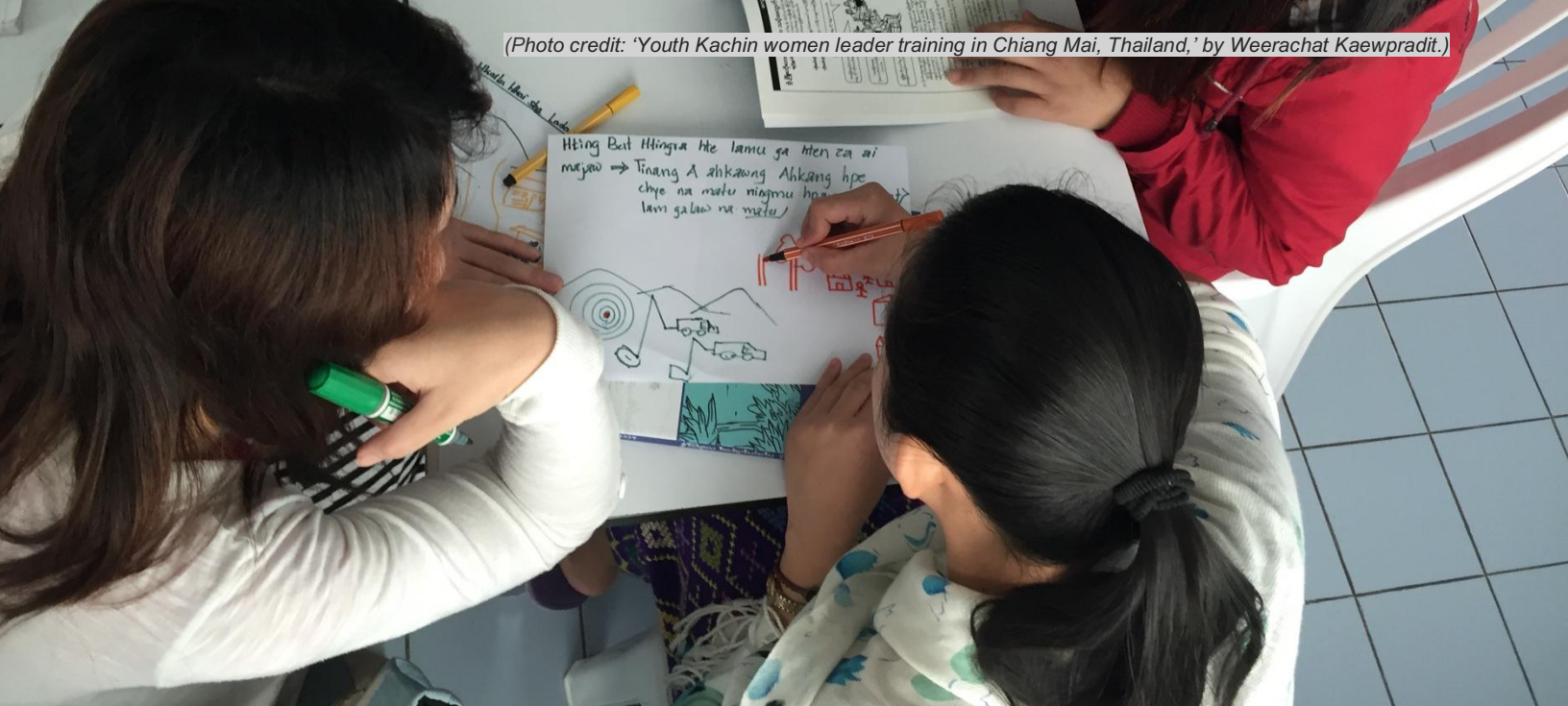
Media

It is significantly important that youths have a platform or a channel to express themselves, to voice out their opinions, and engage with other groups of people, institutions and the public. Therefore, if doable, the organizers shall consider contacting some media outlets in advance to publicize youth voice and to make their advocacy campaign messages heard!

It is also crucial that every day of the workshop, these following three steps should be repeated.

- 1** **First step:** Warm-up and/or recap what we learned from the previous day
- 2** **Second step:** Conduct the day's activities, which the organizers are obligated to explain the procedures and rules clearly, explicitly, and patiently. Be alert to the energy and attention of your participants, as each activity for each group could have a very different result. Be ready to adjust your schedule and sequences.
- 3** **Last step:** Sum up each activity and at the end of the day. Make time for all participants to give a reflection in their own words to the group. If time is up and you have had a pretty long day, you can save this for the recap next morning. Let's get started!





Mini-workshop

Choose activities from all three chapters to make your own workshop recipe! If you have a restriction on time and/or other resources, you may choose to conduct a workshop for two days, one day, or half of the day. Below is the list of activities we recommend you choose from each chapter.

This is ranked by number of stars (*, **, ***), more stars are more highly recommended.

Depending on objectives you set, you may mix and match these below activities to build your own workshop agendas. You may choose an activity from each chapter or you may choose to skip the whole 'Tree Chapter' and choose activities from 'Forest Chapter' only. At the end of the workshop, the organizers shall tie all activities back to the concept and practices of ecological child rights (ECR).

Tree Chapter	Forest Chapter	River Chapter
Greetings*	Recap*	Recap*
Check-in*	What does development mean to you?*	Get frozen!*
The art of nature***	What is happening in the Mekong region?***	Mekong children role play**
Storytelling - animals and fish stories*	Children and development projects documentaries**	Learn to do an advocacy campaign – to take action!***
Telling your own stories**	Mekong Magic Palms**	
Let's take a field trip! **	Check our child rights in our lives and communities**	
	Let's adopt the Ecological Child Rights (ECR) Mindset***	

Tree Chapter:

NATURE, YOU AND ME, AND US



(Photo credit: 'Roaming the grassland as my playground, Tibetan Plateau, Qinghai, China,' by Weerachat Kaewpradit.)

Morning

I. Warm-up (30-45 mins)

Conduct a couple of icebreaker games and invite all participants to introduce themselves. See below activities. You can also find more activities from a iMekong's factsheet at: bit.ly/iMekong_training.

Greetings. Hundreds of languages are spoken in five of the Mekong countries. It will be very interesting to have your trainees firstly saying 'Hello' in as many languages as possible to each other. Have them introduce themselves with names and where they are from.

Check-in. Get everyone to sit or stand in a circle. Ask each person to (1) introduce their names with ONE action expression (e.g., jumping, waving, dancing, etc.); and (2) introduce their community livelihood in action as well such as fishing, farming, teaching, etc.

Common ground. Ask everyone to think in pairs or small groups what common rules of action and behavior should be, in order to achieve this workshop. Share with the whole group. Conclude. Write these rules on big paper and hang on the wall in the meeting room. We encourage positive learning processes and we usually do not have harsh punishment rule but there can be some fun things like a cultural dance for those who break the ground rules.

II. Learn about yourselves and others (2.5 - 3 hours)

The objectives of below activities A and B are: (1) to enhance the ability of participants to express themselves, to let other Mekong youths learn more about each other stories and communities; and (2) to begin introducing the concept of child safety policy.

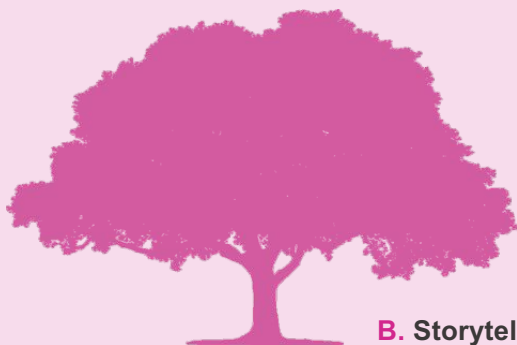


A. The art of nature (30-35 mins)

1. Ask the participants to look around indoor, outdoor, and surrounding areas to find and choose an item from nature that is important to them in any way. For example, they may pick a leaf, a rock, a flower, a fruit, some food on the table close by, etc.

If the workshop takes place somewhere else that is not their local communities, their regions, or their countries - please notify the children to bring an item from their home communities in advance prior to attending the workshop (if applicable).

2. Ask everyone to sit down in a circle and explain what they have chosen and WHY the thing is important to them or their communities. For this specific activity, it is required that everyone listen to their peers respectfully, and refrain from questions for now.
3. After everyone has shared their reasons, ask the group to share what they have learned from other their peers in this activity?
4. A facilitator manages time for everyone and closes this activity before moving to activity B.

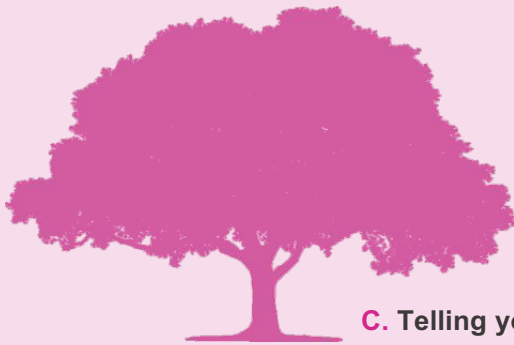


B. Storytelling - animal and fish stories (1 hour)

This activity requires reading material from '*Mekong Watch Book: The People's Story*' (2015). We retrieved some example stories from the book and put them at the end section of this curriculum booklet in 'Training Materials' page 75. You can also download the full version (in PDF) from the following links as follows.

Lao version:	bit.ly/PeopleStoryLao
Khmer version:	bit.ly/PeopleStoryKhmer
Thai version:	bit.ly/PeopleStoryThai
English version:	bit.ly/PeopleStoryEng

1. Ask participants to sit down in a circle. A trainer then pick a story from the Mekong Watch Book that suits the audience and tells the story to the group. If possible and appropriate, you may ask participants to read some sections of the story, for example, person A reads para 1, person B reads para 2, and so on.
2. Ask the group what they think about the story. The facilitator may provide some thoughts or a lesson from the 'People Story' to share with the group as well as listen to what participants want to say.
3. Then, ask the participants who would like to share stories from their community, village, or family about animals and nature that they have heard growing up, to the group.
4. A facilitator manages time for everyone and closes this activity before moving to the next activity.



C. Telling your own stories (1.5 hours)

This activity aims to help participants think critically about their community's environment in a reflection to their own experiences physically and emotionally. Depending on the number of your participants, time constraints, workshop venue, and budget, you may choose to conduct the A or B set of activities.

For instance, a small group of participants, or big group but come from the same community, time spend less than an hour, in a smaller room, with a couple of marker pens –these do well for the Set A.

For both sets, please give a darker green marker pen to girls and a lighter green marker pen to boys; a darker red marker pen to girls and a lighter red marker pen to boys. There might be some differences between girls and boys.

Set A: 1) A trainer draws a picture of a community or draw a rough map of the landscape of an average village (may consist of mountains, rivers, houses, farms, etc.) on a paper to hang on the wall. See an example below for both set A and B.

2) Invite each participant to come to approach a picture of a community/village and use a marker to draw a GREEN circle around a place that they FEEL it is very meaningful to their childhood, explain why.

3) Then in a second round, invite each youth to come up again to the picture and use a marker to draw a RED circle around a place where they FEEL uncomfortable or in danger and to explain why.

4) Also encourage the participants to add a drawing, if applicable, to the map of anything that they think is missing from the picture? and explain why. *This could help illustrate a development project, a dam, a polluted river, the location of a factory, a huge plantation, etc.



(Photo credit: 'Telling your own stories,' by Mekong Youth Assembly.)

- Set B:** 1) A trainer provides a drawing paper to participants. One paper may be given to a pair or a small group of participants who came from the same community. Ask them to draw a rough landscape of their community/village.
- 2) Ask every group to use a marker to draw a GREEN circle around a place that they FEEL it is very meaningful to their childhood, and to explain why and discuss with their group members.
- 3) Again, ask every group to use a marker to draw a RED circle around a place where they FEEL uncomfortable or in danger and to explain why and discuss with their group members.
- 4) Encourage the participants to add a drawing, if applicable, to the map or landscape of anything that they think is missing from the picture? and explain why. *This could help illustrate a development project, a dam, a polluted river, a location of a factory, a huge plantation, etc.

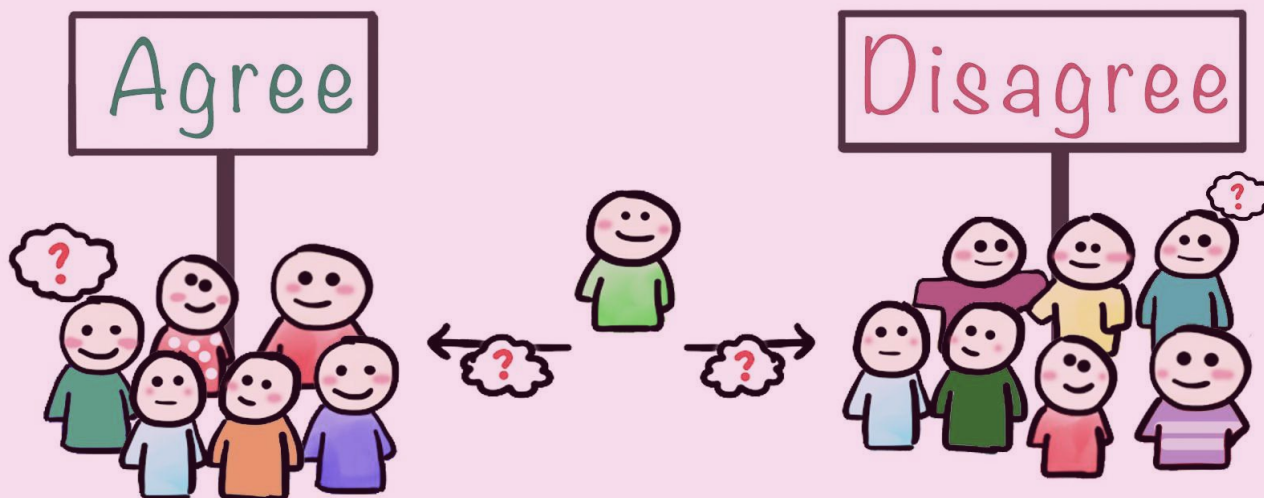
Discussion

Next, when everyone in the group is done with drawing, takes a small break for a few minutes for everyone to look at the drawings. Then, open the floor for discussion, and ask the group:

- What do you think about the GREEN and RED circles?
- What happened? Who is responsible for those circles?
- Why do you feel in danger or uncomfortable in the RED circles?
- How do you take care of the GREEN circles?
- Are you taking part in causing any GREEN and RED circles?
- Do some of you feel the same way in seeing what are in these GREEN and RED circles?

Closure activity

At the very end of the open discussion, a trainer leads the group to talk about a **child safety policy**. A trainer puts two banner written 'AGREE' and 'DISAGREE' on the walls opposite from one another in a room.



Then, ask all participants: do they AGREE or DISAGREE with these following statements? They have to walk and stay at the AGREE or DISAGREE corners. Have them explain about their decisions. This activity is best exercised when everyone stands up and walk. It is important to encourage children to ask each other questions or comment on each other's opinions as well.

Example statement 6.1: Keeping children safe is **everyone's responsibility**. (Who is 'everyone'? Parents, school teachers, Prime Minister, company owner, etc.)

Example statement 6.2: We must keep children safe by providing and creating a safe environment for them. (What is included in 'environment'? Playground? School? Water? Air?).

Example statement 6.3: A **safe environment** is only about man-made good such as houses, schools, roads (How about feeling safe? The emotional aspects of being safe?).

Example statement 6.4: Children are just children; we do not know much. Therefore, there is no need for **children's participation** (What do we know and not know? Can we learn and be informed?).

Example statement 6.5: Girls and boys have the same safety concerns. (What might they be different? How differences influence participants?).

To conclude, a trainer closes this activity by sharing the key concept of a child safety policy and the ecological child rights (ECR).

Keeping children safe is a responsibility of everyone in society. Both government and public organizations and professionals, who work with children, are also required to ensure that their policies and practices reflect this responsibility. Thus, a child protection policy provides guidelines for organizations and their staff to create safe environments for children.

To sum up, a child safety policy is a tool that protects both children and staff by clearly defining what action is required to keep children safe, and ensuring a consistency of behavior so that all staff follow the same process. Specifically, in a development project, the child safety policy must be established and implemented to make sure children of today and tomorrow will not be harmed in anyway, physically or mentally.

A safe environment is where the risk of harm is minimized and children feel secure to learn and grow. Harm relates not only to dangers in the built environment such as houses, schools, and playgrounds, but also in the fundamental things such as lighting, space, water, air, nature, etc. It also refers to the environment where violence, physical threats, verbal abuse, threatening gestures, sexual harassment and racial discrimination are reduced.

A child safe environment policy means to set clear guidelines and procedures to ensure the well-being of children and young people. The policy is initiated by governments and project developers such as private companies aiming to minimize the risk of children being harmed in any way, at the current period of time and in the future to come.

Children's participation is in Article 12 of the CRC (1990) which affirms that children should be listened to on any matter that concerns them and their views be given due consideration in accordance with their age and maturity. Participation is a basic civil right which includes the right to information, to expression, to opinions and thoughts, to decision-making, to form and join associations, to identity and to privacy.

Children's protection is in Article 19 of the CRC (1990) which refers to the prevention, protection, and responses taken by individuals, organizations, community and countries to violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect against children. Child protection undertakes in particular to a community, environment or project and program that protect children from the risk of harm due to the situation in which they live in.

For example, a development project owned by a government and a private company with no concept of a child safety policy and the ecological child rights (ECR), such as a mega-dam, a large agriculture plantation, a mining project –these can create the displacement of children whether through voluntary or forced displacement. It is essential to recognize the relationship between development project, migration and children's rights, which has so far been overlooked in development projects and policy-making processes.

Children are more vulnerable than adult in many areas such as they loss access to education, severe health problems, psychological negative impact such as loss of sense home and community, difficult childhood, emotional immaturity. Children can also become vulnerable to trafficking, child labor and exploitation.





Afternoon

D. Let's take a field trip! (2-3 hours)

Take all children/youth out from a square classroom to an open space, a garden, a forest. Changing to a new environment, especially to green space, enhances their learning process! It depends on the transportation and time limit. You may take a field trip to a new location or use a garden nearby. Given a limited time traveling to the field should not take more than 30 minutes.

How to prepare and choose a location:

- A place to learn new concepts about environmental challenges and the importance of nature.
- The place is safe and not too far away from the main workshop location.
- Survey the place thoroughly and multiple times if needed.
- Provide plan A, B, and C also an alternative site, route, or else.
- Always be OVER PREPARED, in terms of, children's need, time, distance, safety, food supply, transportation, staff members, etc.

Thumb rule: All aspects in conducting the field trip are always considered and decided based on 'the best interests of the children'.

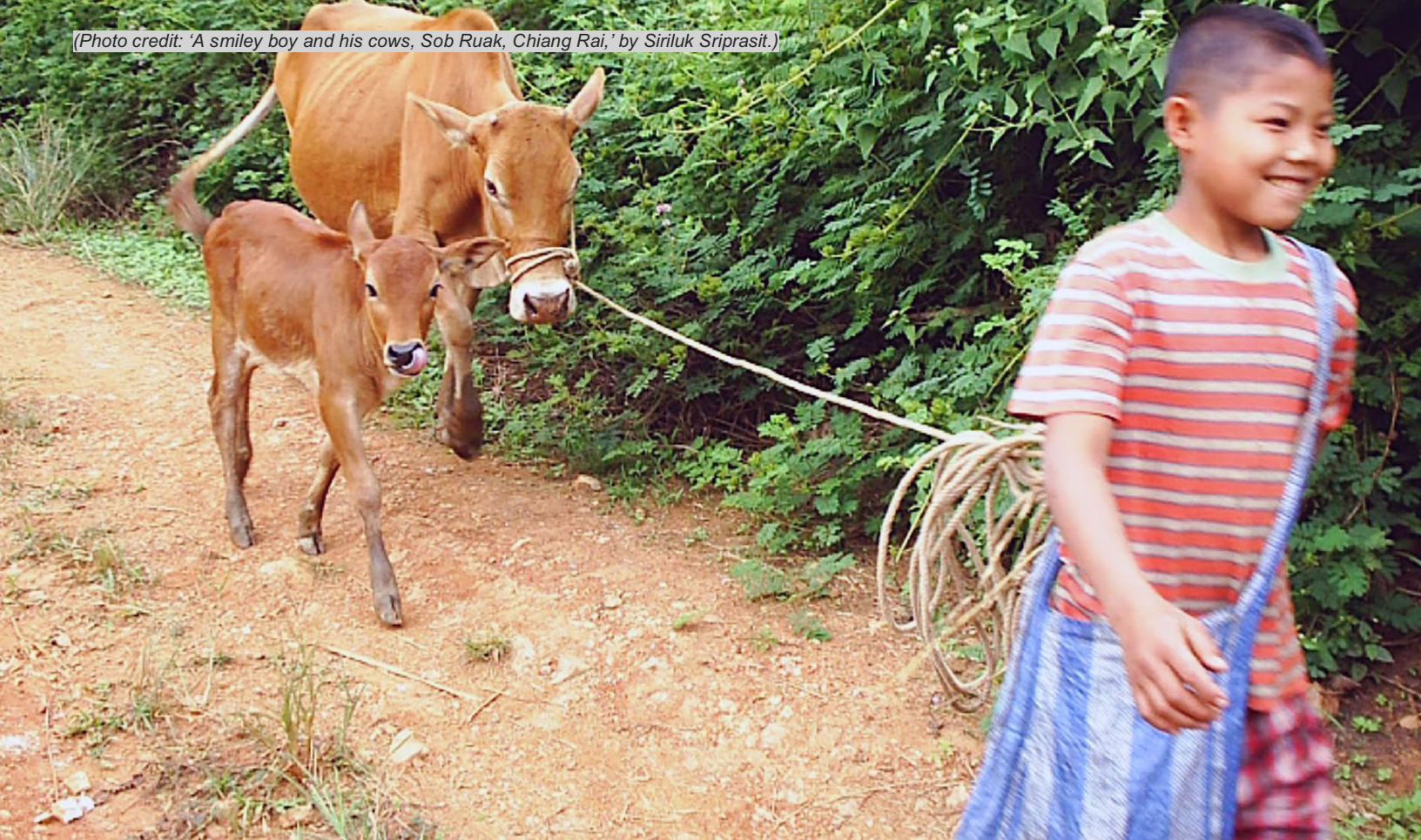
The activity at the field trip location: Trainers will make different sizes of frames (made by ropes, papers, wood sticks, etc.), and lay those frames on the ground or hang them in the air. For example, framing the grass, rocks, tree roots, or framing a view of a river, a mountain, people farming, fishing etc. If taking them to a development project's construction site, keep some distance and make sure your frames cover the view of the construction.

1. Let participants observe a sight viewed through those frames (either on the ground or up in the air).
2. Ask them to take note and think of what they see through those frames relating to their lives.
3. Have them choose one of the frames that strikes them the most and draw roughly what they have seen.
4. You can lay those drawings on the ground or hang them on trees like an art gallery of nature. Invite everyone to take a look at other fellows' drawings. Ask what they saw and what is in their drawings.
5. A trainer closes the activity by simply connecting all the points the participants have expressed.

Those small pictures that everyone see through the frames can lead to something very beautiful and they are equally important. Whether it is a spider making webs, or an uncle and a grandma planting rice, or some children fishing, or a big tree standing tall near the river - they are very important in themselves.

It shows how all creatures sustain their lives and how they are connected within what we call 'the ecosystem'. Sometimes, the interruption to this connection happens naturally or many times that can be human-made.





Forest Chapter:

BE INSPIRED & STAY ENGAGED

Morning

I. Recap the first day (15 mins)

It might be very early in the morning with the sun is shining and the fresh air, a brief exercise session could be useful. After spreading our arms and stretching our bodies, invite some participants to recap about what they have learned and done on Day 1. You may consider using this short activity for your recap.

Game rat and cat: Get two different objects: something that can be held and passed on, and get everyone to sit or stand in a circle. Pretend object no.1 is a cat and object no. 2 is a rat.

Ask one person to hold the cat and the next person to hold a rat. They will pass it on to the person who sits or stands next to them with their right hand.

The cat person must move the object around their body two times before passing it to the next person. The rat person just passes the object on to the next person. The cat and the rat go around the circle until both objects are with one person at the same time.

In that case, that person must answer the question, which could be: what did you learn from yesterday? Which activity did you like the most? It is okay not to do the game for your morning recap. You may just want to sit together in the circle and have a discussion casually and naturally.



II. Children and development (2 - 2.5 hours)

In this session, we will focus on development and its positive and negative effects on children. To encourage our Mekong youth to be critical thinkers, we will do many 'learning-by-doing' activities. These activities help participants to think about what development means to them. Prepare facilitators who may present different perceptions and perspectives on 'development'.


Ask the group to sit in a circle and ask **what do you think 'development' means?** What does development mean to children? Provide an assistant/translator if needed, to help clarify the development term in different Mekong languages.

What does development mean to you?

See the International Accountability Project's Guidebook at: bit.ly/ADBGuide

- Ask participants to relax, close their eyes and prepare to use their imaginations. When they are relaxed, a facilitator says "Think about your community - your family, your neighbors, all the people in your village or town. Think about what they do in their daily lives. And think about your daily lives."
- Then distribute a drawing/flipchart paper with a line drawn across the paper to divide top and bottom and markers/crayons to all participants.
- Ask: What developments do you want in your community? Please draw and write these down on the top part of the paper. You may continue asking a few more questions.
 - What are some projects that can help you improve your life?
 - What types of things would help you to be healthier, happier, and to have more opportunities?

Notes: Depending on the size of your workshop, you can have each person draw their own or you can break them into smaller groups of around 3-4 persons to draw together on a flipchart paper.



When they finish the first half of the drawing, ask them to draw on the other half of paper what kind of development projects that are actually happening or will happen to their home and communities either from the government or the private sectors.

Break into small groups of no more than 5 people. They will now have a chance to share their thoughts to the group. Or you can hang them on the wall and have one representative stationed to explain and the rest taking a small tour to see each drawing. Make sure each group switches the person who stays with the drawing, so they have a chance to see other's drawings.

Open a small discussion. You may ask the group “Is the second half of the drawing similar or different to the top part? How? Why are the things you want to develop not happening? Has anyone ever asked you about what you want, or about your ideas?”

Conclude the session. The trainer should be well aware that the participants may come from very diverse environments regarding genders, family- upbringings, education, socio-economical situations, cultural and beliefs systems, etc. These factors might differ how they perceive and understand 'development'. The trainer shall stay open-minded and shall go with the flow of the dynamic interaction with and among the participants. The trainer may conclude this session as follows,

- Development can poise both positive and negative impact to different groups of people. It is important to understand that who benefits and who has to live with the negative impacts which some of those impacts could be mitigated but some could not.
- As different people may think differently about development projects, it is essential to include all aspects of the project and must involve all groups of people who will be directly and indirectly affected by both positive and negative consequences into the decision-making processes.
- Many people believe that real development respects and protects human rights of all people, both children and adults, and the environment.

A trainer sums up the responses or comments from the participants and move to the next activity.

(Photo credit: 'Youth Kachin women leader training in Chiang Mai,' by Weerachat Kaewpradit.)



(Photo credit: 'Development projects in the Mekong Regions,' by Mekong Youth Assembly.)

III. What is happening in the Mekong region?

- Ask everyone to come back to the big group. The trainers further the discussion by using a **Mekong Region map**. Post a map of the Mekong Region on the wall (or ask a volunteer to draw a rough map of the Mekong region).
- Handout a photo that you prepared; each person gets a different photo from different parts of the Mekong Region. **Photos** include landscapes of the river and surrounding areas, people's livelihoods such as farming and fishing, and growing vegetables, local markets, completed dams, construction sites of the dams, and local ceremonies from all six countries of the Mekong.
- Ask everyone to look closely at the photo they have and to try to guess where this photo was taken. Then put the photo on the map as accurate as possible. Ask some volunteers to explain what the photos are about and where were taken.
- Trainers may want to relocate the photo to their actual locations. Then, the trainers explain about those photos and further ask more questions, then a dialogue happens naturally.
- **Example questions:** Why are there few people living in the Tibetan part of the Mekong and millions more in Vietnam's Mekong delta? What are the main means to sustain livelihood of people living along Mekong river? (e.g., How do they use the river, what activity do they do along river bank?) or invite some participants to tell stories relating to those photos and locations.

A trainer sums up this activity and adds more information on a current situations of development policies and projects in all Mekong countries.





(Photo credit: 'Would you like to have a bowl of butter tea?', Tibet,' by Weerachat Kaewpradit.)

Children and development project documentaries

Introduction: There are many children facing challenges because their ecology and environment are in danger, as well as their lives. These films will show you the impacts of the development projects on children, youth, and their communities and how they respond to it.

Tools and Materials: Computer, speakers, and/or big screen (white cloth hanging on the wall will do) It would be a good idea to download the film so you can play it offline.

- Screen one of the video clips (or all clips, depending on time availability) listed below.
- After watching a video, a trainer leads a discussion with some given example questions. Invite all participants to share their thoughts and opinions.
- A trainer sums up this activity on how much a development project means to the physical and spiritual growth of children. Specifically, who has the right to say what kind of development a community should have?





Lives of Ou River (Laos, 2011)

Length: 25.07 Minutes

Link: bit.ly/OuRiverStory

Synopsis: The Ou river or Nam Ou, is known to many people as the “Rice Bowl River”. It is one of the most important rivers in Laos. The story follows the daily life of Khmu villagers that depend on the vibrant nature and rich biodiversity of the Ou River in Northern Laos. The river originates in China's Yunnan province on the mountain ridge between China and Laos. Villagers enjoy peaceful livelihood along the well-preserved riverbanks, sustained by the Ou's bountiful drinking water and aquaculture. But the Ou river is now facing significant changes because of the development of 7-dams project built by China's Sinohydro Corporation. The first unit of which began generating electricity already in November 2015. The Nam Ou Dam 3/Phase 2, is under construction. Many negative impacts have already been reported by indigenous communities who live along the river; specifically, the decreased fish population and the disappearance of the Nam Ou's riverweed.

Examples of Questions:

- How are humans part of or dependent upon the rest of the natural world?
- What do humans do to preserve or conserve those necessary connections and natural systems?
- What will happen if a dam is built on the Ou River?
- What is an impact on children and young people, if a dam is built?
- Who should take part in the policy-decision making process?

What we may learn from the story:

- A natural environment is essential to the development of a child; a safely natural environment means a well-being of a child of today and tomorrow.
- Transboundary impacts to children, indigenous children and young people along the Ou River.
- Negative impacts occur when there is little or no children's participation.



So I travel alone to Thailand.

Mong Pan Youth of Shan Communities (Myanmar, 2015)

Length: 4.30 Minutes

Link: bit.ly/MongPanYouth

Synopsis: Shining is a co-founder of the Mong Pan Youth Association and Weaving Bonds Across borders. Both organizations focus on youth leadership development and peacebuilding. She tells her life journey as a human-rights defender, and a daughter and a woman. For the past decade, she has been working towards the promotion of human rights and protection of her community, where their lives have been threatened from development projects, especially the Mong Ton hydropower dam.

Examples of Questions:

- Why did Shinning become active in the fight for human rights?
- What challenges did Shining face as a woman leader in her culture and community?
- What will happen if the Mong Ton hydropower dam is built?
- Why is it so important to involve young people in human rights training?
- What is an impact on children and young people, if a dam is built?
- Who should take part in the policy-decision making process?

What we may learn from the story:

- Women and young people are also in the heart of development, and their participation must be taken into a policy decision-making process.
- Female leadership in empowering local communities and young people can bring peaceful solutions to the destructive development and transboundary impacts.



Chiang Khong's Ban Boon Rueng (Thailand, 2015)

Length: 5.15 Minutes

Link: bit.ly/BanBoonRueng

Synopsis: This story tells about the livelihoods of the local people relating to nature in Ban Boon Rueng community. It is located near the Mekong river bank in Chiang Khong district, Chiang Rai province, Thailand. While the local people have been taking good care of the forest and nature for generations, the Thai government has proposed to build a Special Economic Zone (SEZ). The SEZ project will have potential negative impacts on the natural forest and rivers. The local people and youths are devotedly trying to save the precious forest.

Examples of Questions:

- What kind of relationship do local people have with their natural surroundings?
- How do nature and the people take care of each other?
- What may be an impact on the environment if a special economic zone is built?
- What is an impact on children and young people if a special economic zone is built?
- Who should take part in the policy-decision making process?

What we may learn from the story:

- For any development projects, all stakeholders must be well informed before any decision can be made. Key information about the project must be disseminated in advance prior to any public hearings with a fair amount of time for people to read and understand.
- Locals' and children's participation must be taken seriously into a policy-making decision process as they will be directly impacted by the development project.
- The people organized themselves to stop the project.
- Spiritual belief helps building solidarity among the community members.



Afternoon

III. Mekong Magic Palms (30 mins)

Lead the group to the next learning activity of the 'Columbian Hypnosis' game, which we adopt to use in this curriculum and call 'Mekong Magic Palms' (the Columbian Hypnosis has its foundation from the 'Theatre of the Oppressed', for more info visit: bit.ly/Columbian_Hypnosis).

Many times, when a development takes place, there are losers and winners, and there are leaders and followers. The question is how can we be a good leader and a good follower? This exercise helps participants to understand power relations in development. You can choose to do one route or both.

Route 1

1. Divide all participants into pairs and they decide who is "A" and who is "B".
2. Ask A to hold their palms up to about six inches from their B's face
3. Ask B to imagine that their partner's hand has hypnotized them and they must follow anywhere it goes, keeping the same distance between their face and palm at all times. A moves around in any way they wish as they are the leaders and B are the followers. See an example at: bit.ly/Magic_Palms.
4. After a couple minutes, they will switch roles. B will lead and A will follow.

Route 2

1. Ask participants to get a partner and they decide who is "A" and who is "B".
2. Ask A to close their eyes, while B does not close their eyes.
3. Without talking, ask B to lead A around the room or outside the room. B can lead A to touch something. Make sure A closes their eyes at all the and B does not do anything harmful to their partner.
4. After a couple minutes, they will switch roles. A will lead and B will follow.



Remember that for both routes, the whole game is in silence.

However, a facilitator may interrupt at certain points such as announcing the role switch, making sure no one gets harmed or feels uncomfortable, or asking some questions as follows:

- How are you going to keep your partner safe as you move along?
- Why do you think you are a good leader or a good follower?
- How do you feel about following your leader with no voice, no participation?
- How do you challenge the power that you think is unjust?

After this section, gather and reflect on what everybody feels about the activity, write on the paper, make it visual, both negative and positive responses:

- Was it ever fun? When did it become not fun?
- Did anyone stop or refuse to follow? Why?
- How do you feel when they are in a leading position?
- How do you feel when in a following position?
- How does this exercise symbolize or represent the situation in their real lives in their families, schools, communities and countries?

This game aims to help participants explore the roles of the leader and the follower:

- Who is in control?
- What if one could be leading and following at the same time?
- How does this game relate to real-life situations (in their communities)?

A trainer sums up and move to the next session.

IV. Learn and check our child rights in our lives and communities (1 hours)

For this session, we will discuss about child rights situations in different communities and in relating to specific development projects. First, we will learn what are the rights of the child, and later use a thermometer to check on how much those rights are respected in participants' communities.

It is important that all rights of the child are respected in order to reach their full potential. Participants will gain an in-depth knowledge of the Convention on Rights of the Child (CRC) 1990 and work towards to be active citizenship and defending their rights.



What are the rights of the child?

1. Start this activity by preparing one paper bag for each participant. Each bag should contain a variety of candy. Some bags will have no candy, some will have a couple piece, and others will have four or more.
2. Explain that the participants are going to be given one paper bag. The goal of the game is for each participant to collect four pieces of candy.
3. Tell the participants that they must not speak during this game. Discuss some ways you can communicate without speaking, for example, eye contact, gestures, etc.
4. Allow everyone to have about three minutes to play the game.
5. Once everyone seems to be finished, ask everyone to stop communicating and gather in a circle. Allow each person to tell how many pieces of candy they did collect.
6. Ask all participants to share their feelings about this game.

Guiding questions:

- How did you feel when we started playing the game?
- What did you think when you were told you could not speak during the game?
- What was fun about this game?
- What was difficult about the game?

After this discussion, collect the fruits, and allow everyone to enjoy some candies!



Comparing wants and needs:

1. Create a chart labeled “Everybody loves candy”. Create two columns, one with “Why do we want candy?” and another with “Why do we need candy?” Have participants to respond by writing their answers on sticky notes, and then placing them on the chart.
2. Review student response, and encourage dialogue about whether or not candy is something we actually need. Ask everyone to consider the difference between a want and a need. A facilitator write their thoughts on a board that is visible to everyone.
3. Follow the discussion by asking everyone to give examples for each category.

Want: Something we would like to have (candy, toys, bicycle).

Need: Something we must have in order to survive (water, food, health care, education).

4. At this point, it is hoped that a conversation surrounding “rights” will develop. Ask participants if they have heard the phrase “you have rights”. Discuss their ideas, and the contexts in which they have heard about rights. Provide a definition for “rights” as follows: Rights are the basic needs that every child deserves to have.
5. Ask participants to think about which of the “needs” would also be considered as “rights”. Then have the participants to think about rights for children, and independently brainstorm a list called “Rights of the child,”

(Source: ‘Rights of the child’s games’ retrieved from bit.ly/ChildRights_Games).



Checking Rights of all children:

Provide the participants with some time to review their list of child rights. It does not matter yet to pin down which child right is in which article in according to the 1990 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). It is important to encourage participants to think and learn from each other.

- Drawing a thermometer on a big paper or a board, with scale-marks ranking from 0-10.
- Ask participants to rate to what extent do they think their child rights are fulfilled in their community, ranking from 0-10? As 0 is 'not at all' and 10 is 'fully fulfilled', by circling a number with a marker/pen.
- Ask each person to explain the answer.
- Ask everyone to name two rights they feel are well respected, and two rights are not.
- Ask everyone to name two rights that affected by a development project they are experiencing, their communities are facing, either for better or worse consequences.

Example: A new school that is bringing education to young people in a village, in guaranteeing rights to education; in a meanwhile, an open-pit coal mine may violate the rights to housing, food, and safe and clean environment.

Notes: A trainer helps pointing out that children rights are not just only words on paper. Learning about child rights is about examining our living experiences. If there is any document that defines 'child rights', it is measured by the living experience of people in their everyday life. Move to the next section of the workshop.





The 1990 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

Following are examples of the rights of the child, view the full details in 'Training Materials' session, page 72.

Article 6

Survival and development. Children have right to live. Government should ensure that children survive and develop healthily.

Article 12

Respect for the views of the child. When adults are making decisions that affect children, children have the right to say what they think should happen and have their opinions taken into account.

Article 13

Freedom of expression. Children have the right to get and share information, as long as the information is not damaging to them or others.

Article 17

Access to information; mass media. Children have the right to get information that is important to their health and well-being.

Article 19

Protection from all forms of violence. Children have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, physically or mentally.

Article 24

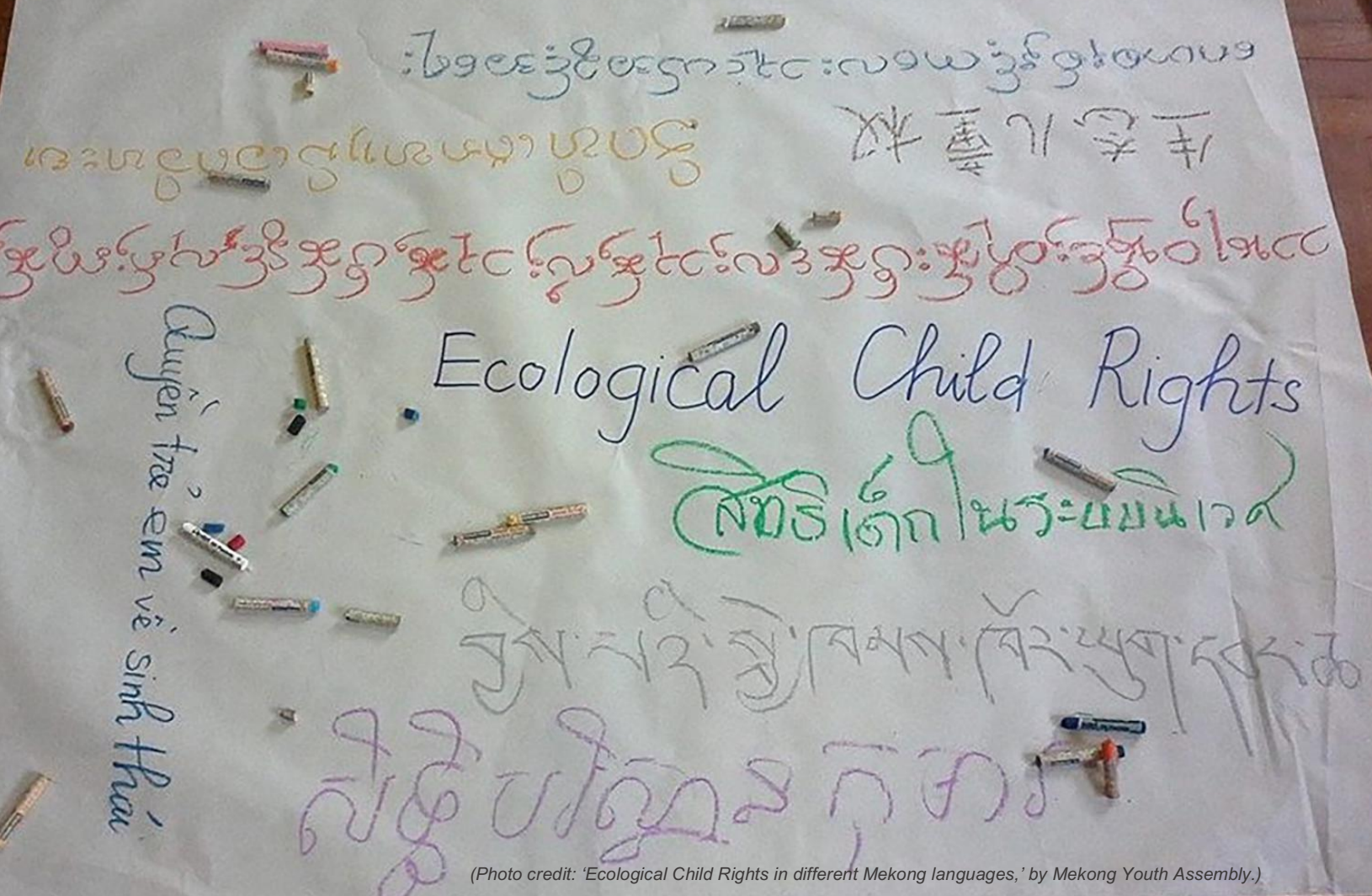
Health and health services. Children have the right to good quality health care – the best healthcare possible – to safe drinking water, nutritious food, a clean and safe environment, and information to help them stay healthy.

Article 27

Adequate standard of living. Children have the right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and mental needs.

Article 42

Knowledge of rights. Governments should make the Convention known to adults and children. Adults should help children learn about their rights, too.



(Photo credit: 'Ecological Child Rights in different Mekong languages,' by Mekong Youth Assembly.)

V. Let's adopt the Ecological Child Rights (ECR) Mindset (2.5 hours)

There are many different impacts on ecological child rights due to development projects. This activity helps all participants to adopt ECR framework into their lives, by analyzing the impacts on children caused by the development projects in our Mekong countries. Trainers provide or select development cases for the participants to study or may choose from case study stories in our Training Materials section at the end of this booklet.

Group activity (1.5 hours):

1. Present different situations from development projects that have negatively affected children; for example, children were relocated, child laborers used in plantations, children going hungry, children living in polluted environment, etc. See some examples from the 'Training Materials' session on page 78.
2. Participants break into small groups of no more than five people. Every group should be very mixed in terms of genders, cultures, countries, etc.
3. Assign each group a different development project case to study. They will be brainstorming both positive and negative impacts of the assigned project. Make sure that everyone has a chance to speak and share their ideas.
4. Each small group will have two flipchart papers.

Paper #1 - List ideas on what are the benefits and/or positive impacts? And who gains from this?

Paper #2 - List what are the negative impacts of the project? And who is affected by the project?

5. After that, each group matches those impacts to the 1990 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) list, such as, right to play, right to education, right to clean and safe water, etc.
6. A trainer clarifies which article applies to what circumstances. A facilitator concludes this last session of the day. As you can see, the word 'development' has both positive and negative impacts on child rights. There are also many ways to address child rights in a development project, as follows:
 - **Increase the positive impacts 'Child Rights Promotion'**
 - **Decrease the negative impacts 'Child Right Protection'**

Notes: Homework for the next day workshop/session: Ask all participants to casually gather in small groups and discuss of how to PROMOTE and PROTECT the child rights in their communities and/or in the case of development projects operating in their province and country. Conclude the day workshop, now it is a good time to present "How the CRC link with ECR".

Right of Survival: If any development projects cause harm to the physical and mental health of children, such as destroying sources of food that children need to develop their bodies, those development projects abuse ECR.

Right of Development: If any development projects make children unable to attend school, provide no time and no space to play, and cannot fulfil their childhood potential and dreams. If the projects minimize forest or natural space which is necessary for children to learn and connect with nature. If they cannot practice traditional cultures and religious activities, as well as cause disconnection with their ancestors and culture. Those development projects abuse ECR.

Right of Protection: If any development projects directly or indirectly force children to become child laborers, stateless children, trafficked children, or child soldiers. If the development project worsens the war and conflicts in their communities and country, these development projects abuse ECR.

Right of Participation: If any development projects: (1) do not provide key information about the project; specifically, the positive and negative impacts to children, their families and communities; (2) the information is not accessible to the people and children; and, (3) do not provide public space for the children and youth to participate and to express their opinions and concerns safely and securely, (e.g., the project developer is responsible to communicate with children in their language both level and degree).

Those development projects abuse ECR. Projects that respect ECR would include children's opinions and be concerned by the impacts on children indicated in the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) and the Social Impact Assessment (SIA).



The concept of ECR is also included not only to fulfill the rights but also protect their rights from any kind of abuse. Not only children health, ecosystem, but as Southeast Asia and Latin America regions also include the spiritual and cultural aspects as ones of the concept of ECR and its indicators.

The trainer shall ask the participants a question as follows:

Q: What is the spiritual abuse and why do we have to include it into the concept of ECR and its indicators?

After brainstorming and discussions, the trainer may introduce some thoughts regarding this aspect.

A: Spiritual abuse occurs when a spiritual leader or a community leader or an authority (whether within an organization, a government, an institution, a church or a family) misuses their authoritative power and/or the trust placed in them with the intention of controlling, coercing, manipulating or dominating a child.

Spiritual abuse is always about the misuse of power within a framework of spiritual belief or practice, in order to meet the needs of the abuser (or enhance his or her position) at the expense of the needs of the child. Spiritual abuse results in spiritual harm to a child and can be linked to other abuse such as physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

Cultural values are defined as such poor economic status, violence within one's home or one's community which increase the likelihood of children being abused. Some of the most powerful cultural values are specific to the culture and society in which a child lives. It is vital to determine what are the culturally accepted child rearing practices and attitudes to faith, gender, disability, sexual orientation in different countries and regions.

This is not to the trainers to lower the level of concerns, or condone such abuses, but more to understand the societal background and cultural values of their participants.

Notes: This definition should apply to their own social and political settings, and should be adapted to the specific issues relevant to other faith settings.



River Chapter: LET'S TAKE ACTION!



(Photo credit: 'Mekong boy,' by Weerachat Kaewpradit.)

Morning

I. Recap the previous day activities (20 mins)

- All participants sit in a circle, asking each other of ideas to promote and protect child rights, in particularly regarding their ecological well-beings, their living environment, their nature, their education, etc.
- A facilitator takes note on a paper dividing the list of ideas into:

1) Promotion

2) Protection

Make the lists visible to everyone. Hold on to the list, we will use it later.
After this section, let's move to play a game.



Get frozen! Dealing with power, get frozen or get helped. This game will help you to connect more with your trainees and help them connect among themselves. More importantly, it is always a good idea to move our bodies!

All trainees are out in a yard or an open space where they can walk and run around; then, a facilitator explains the rules. There will be one person who has a magical power to freeze other people by tagging them.

Anyone who gets tagged will be frozen, and will call for help. The rest could help the frozen ones by having two people hold hands around the frozen one, and saying “I love you” three times. Then, the frozen one will be set free and can walk again.

The number one rule in this game is everyone can ONLY walk step-by-step (foot-by-foot) as fast as possible, no actual running! Let’s see whether the magical person can get everybody frozen or not.

After the game runs for about 5-8 minutes (depending on the number of trainees you have), you may ask these following questions. “May I ask...”

- The person who had the power to freeze people, how do you feel?
- The person who got frozen, how do you feel?
- The person who got frozen and did or did not get helped, how do you feel?
- Was it fun at first? How about later? Were you frustrating or angry?

A facilitator concludes this session of how people may feel from different perspectives, when they have power or have no power –which cause people to feel and to react differently. A facilitator may ask further questions in specifically to children issues.

Set A:

- Imagine in your community, who (which group) do you think has the most power or the least power, and why?
- How do they may feel as having more or less power in their own community?

Set B:

- Imagine in your community, there is a new development project about to happen (it could be a hydropower dam, a mining project, a new road, etc.). There are positive and negative impacts. But who do you think are the most vulnerable group of people and/or have the least power to say about the project?
- How do you feel if you will be negatively impacted the most?

Notes: The answer can be children, women, elderly people, people with disabilities, etc. This helps participants to think about the vulnerable groups in their own community, and to explore the concept of ECR in more details.

Later, this is the learning day for taking action, it is a good time to discuss about how everyone can work together to help people in need. How having solidarity that heals the spell! After the open discussion, let the group know they will be working on their ideas in a smaller group to create a child right campaign later.



II. Mekong children role play (3 hours)

This activity stimulates participants to think critically and at the same time to take action and to be part of a solution as they will be experiencing some unpredictable consequences.

Preparation:

- A facilitator divides participants into 3-4 groups. Each group should be no more than five people, and each person must have a role in the play.
- Each group is given a short story (see below this activity) to read and try to understand. Ask each group to present their short story to read and make it into a 3-minute role play.
- All groups will have about 30-45 minutes to read the assigned story, discuss and assign within the group who will take which role, and come up with dialogue.
- All group will have about 10 mins to rehearse the role play.

Action: Each group will perform their play from the beginning to the end once. The facilitator asks the audience:

- 1) Who were in the play?
 - 2) What was the play about?
 - 3) Who were the main characters? And what did they want?
 - 4) What did the person A try to do? Was it successful?
 - 5) What did the person B do or not do, so that A didn't get what they want?
 - 6) What could be another way or a better way for the person B to get what they want?
- Then repeat the performance again. The facilitator announces that in this re-play, any participant can raise their hand and say STOP any time to re-place only a role of A or B, and the performance must stop at that point.
 - The person who stops the play, must come up and replace an acting role in the story. The person must try to improve the situation in the story. The rest of the crew responds to the new actor in a reasonable way.
 - After every group finishes performing, open a discussion of each STOP action that was trying to improve the situation. Each group can have 2-3 times STOPs. However, the whole role play and re-plays should not be more than 15 minutes.

Guiding questions:

- What were you trying improve and how?
- Why do you think you can improve the situation?
- What were the consequences? Were they better or worse?
- What else can be done otherwise?



A trainer makes a closure and move to the next session. From the play role activity, we have learned that we can take part in personal and policy-decision making to improve our rights, and to stop the violation of our rights.

The activity focuses much on inner development of the participants. While performing, and interfering the play, they are learning by doing, the impact of this act to their spirit might last for a long time.

In the next session, the trainers will present some cases where young people took an action to promote and protect child rights.



(Photo credit: 'Role play training for Mekong youth.' by Thaike.)

Short story no. 1: My name is Linh, I am 10 years old. I have a younger brother and he is 8 years old. This year, I cannot go to school anymore because my parents do not allow me to go. My parents told me that I have to help the family by taking good care of the house and cooking. They told me that because I am a girl, going to school to study is not useful for me in the future.

Short story no. 2: My name is Koi, I am 15 years old. I am an ethnic minority and a stateless child. I always get the highest score in my class. One day, my teacher told me that our school will give me a scholarship as I am a good student and has good grades. All my friends think I will get this scholarship. Later, my teacher said I can't get this scholarship because I am a stateless child. During that time, a private company came to my village and told the community leader that they want to build a hydropower dam. They needed the villagers to be laborers. My parents asked me to decide whether I want to work for the dam project.

Short story no. 3: My name is Bobo, I am 12 years old. I am living in a rural and high-conflict area. Every night, people in my village cannot sleep, because soldiers are fighting each other. One military army wants to build a dam and a different army does not want the dam. One day, an army leader came to meet my parents and asked me to join his army to be a soldier. I am very scared and do not want to be a soldier. My parents, my sisters, and friends just keep silent; they are also scared of the army.

Short story no. 4: My name is Sokha, I am 14 years old. I am living in a small village. Every day after school, I go to the river nearby for swimming. Almost every weekend I go finishing with my father. Now, my parents do not allow me to go swimming anymore because all my friends got sick and have skin diseases. My dad told me that our river is polluted and not clean as before because a gold mine operates upstream of our river.



Afternoon

II. Learn to do an advocacy campaign - to take action! (3-4 hours)

Trainers present the groups with 1-2 advocacy campaign examples from youths. The following examples are not the only ones and are not limited to this activity. The trainers can find other cases to present.

Mekong Campaign: The youth's dream for future Mekong

See: bit.ly/MekongCampaginIAP and bit.ly/MekongCampaignThaiPBS

Concept:

- A hundred youth representatives from the Mekong region have joined the campaign to save the Mekong River from a series of hydropower dams that threaten the region's food security. The campaign was reported in several mainstream media and gained attention from the public.
- Young activists are advocating to promote and protect human and environmental rights. Often times, young Mekong environmental activists face threats to their safety and security. The access to information concerning development projects is also extremely limited. It is therefore very important to provide space for youths to voice out their concerns of the impacts due to Mekong development projects.
- The activity in March 31, 2016 marked the beginning of a joint campaign to reclaim development in the Mekong region so that it may prioritize the well-being of the next generation. "We dream that we are encouraged to express our opinions freely in all aspects of any given development project. Our movement to stand up for responsible development, justice, non- discrimination, peace and equality are protected by law," - the statement from The Youth's Dream for Future Mekong.

Key message:

- The voice of children and young people must be taken into consideration in policy-making procedures because development projects are determining their present and future well-being.
- This first example reveals the strategy of raising awareness of child rights and development while also working with the media to get their message heard.



Thai youth's Beach for Life Fights to save their ecology

See: Thai youth's Beach for Life's Facebook Page at bit.ly/FB_BeachForLife,
bit.ly/BeachForLife_News and bit.ly/YouthPublicForum

Concept:

- Industrial development impacts have caused sand erosion around the beach shore and have decreased the forestry area in Songkhla province of Thailand, specifically around the Samila beach.
- In 2012, 20 young teens formed the group called 'Beach for Life', advocating that people help take care of nature. Beach for Life Club aims to enhance youth engagement in sustainable development. Two years later, they co-partnered with another 9 universities in the province to save their local ecology.
- The group held 11 public hearings in the past years and collected more than 20,000 opinions and ideas in the process. This led to form the first draft, called 'the youth constitution,' focusing on youth participation in sustainable development.
- "The youth constitution mentions that children should be able to communicate their concerns to adults. Our opinions are based on facts and data. After that, we can work together to study what are suitable solutions for our 7.8 kilometers long beach" - a Beach for Life representative, Way Magazine (September, 2014).
- In August 2015, Beach for Life and other civic groups including Songkhla Forum, the Volunteer Lawyers Group and the Kao Seng fishing community filed a lawsuit with the Environment Department of Songkhla Administrative Court demanding that the local government's Samila sand erosion prevention project be discarded.
- The groups said that the project was illegitimate in essence and process and it goes against the wishes of the local people. The groups also demanded that the court issues an injunction to suspend all the construction.
- In October 2016, the court ruled in favor of Beach for Life and their allies deciding to suspend the project and that the government had illegally not sought participation from local community.
- This second example reveals several campaigns with strategic legal action, research and public hearing.

Key message:

- The young people play a key role in promoting and protecting nature. The children and young people are part of society and therefore their participation is very important.
- They are capable of running campaigns, conducting a study, and engaging in policy-making processes.
- Moreover, by using the legal strategy, their environmental campaigns are more effective. In the case of the Beach for Life group, they filed a lawsuit against the local government, as its sand erosion protection project did not include the voice of the people in the process.



(Photo credit: Mother Nature youth advocate environmental changes issues in Areng Valley and youth activism at Free-Prior-Informed-Consent (FPIC) Workshop in June 2013 at Oxfam Cambodia, by Wora Sukraroek from bit.ly/MC_ArengValley.)

Cambodian youth group ‘Mother Nature’: The journey to save the Areng Valley

See: bit.ly/MN_ArengValley, bit.ly/Maptia_ArengValley, and bit.ly/NYT_ArengValley.

Concept:

- The Cambodian youth group, Mother Nature has been restlessly advocating through offline and online media to save their river and forest from the governmental planned Chay Areng Dam in Koh Kong, Cambodia.
- The Chay Areng dam was planned by Sinohydro, China's largest hydropower company. If built, this dam would flood at least 26,000 acres and displace over 1,500 people including the Chong indigenous community. The dam would threaten the habitats of 31 endangered species. The Areng River is home to the endangered Siamese Crocodile, which is already extinct in over 99% of its original range.
- Besides its rich biodiversity, the Areng Valley is the ancestral land for the Chong indigenous, for whom the area holds enormous cultural significance. Also, many communities heavily depend on the rivers and forests for their sustenance (Mekong Commons, 2014).
- Mother Nature, is a Cambodian grassroots movement including youth and other community members. They fought to protect from the proposed Areng dam.
- Mother Nature and the local communities launched many advocacy campaigns to stop the Chay Areng Dam from being built. Their campaign slogan "for the valley, for our life" is shouted as they fight for environmental and social justice.
- Mother Nature closely works with youth networks such as Khmer Youth Empire to bring knowledge of the issues associated the environmental and social impacts of the Areng dam to the public through social media campaigning, protests, and media advocacy.
- The local people and youth also applied direct actions, such as road blocks, guarding, protests, etc. - to prevent the Sinohydro company staff from coming into the village to collect data. Follow their most recent activities on their website at: <http://www.mothenaturecambodia.org/>.
- This final example reveals the uses of direct actions and online advocacy campaigns to raise the awareness of the problem.

Key message:

- This case is key for everyone learning to take action. As the youth activists worked closely with the local people and religious leaders, they had to be aware of their safety and security as well.
- The political situation in Cambodia suppresses the freedom of speech and the government often abuses human rights. We can also use this case to discuss the security issues that young environmental activists are facing.

Discussion

Discuss these important aspects with participants before they launch their own campaign. Let's analyze and list the strategies used in the aforementioned cases on the blackboard so that everyone can see and follow up. Trying to help answering these following questions together.

Set 1:

- What is the main issue or problem?
- What do they want to change? What change do they want to see?
- What is their campaign objective?
- What is the key message in the campaign?
- How they communicate their message? What did they do?
- Who is their target audience?

Set 2:

- Who is involved in the campaign? Who can support you, and how?
- What kind of materials and/or resources do they use?
- Who helps these youth and children in their actions, and how?
- Should young people work alone?
- Should we work with adults in our community as well? And how did they do that?

Set 3:

- What could go wrong, and what could interrupt their campaign?
- Are there any risks or dangers we should be aware of?
- Is this risk causing an event (or campaign) failure in any aspect? Or posing risks to physical, economic and social risks to campaigners themselves?

Reviewing and comparing different campaign strategies

There is no absolute answer for what is the best campaign strategy for your campaign, but what you can do best is to learn about other campaigns and discuss among your group members and other activists. Nevertheless, these three youth campaigns inspire us and we can learn from them, and draw both successful and challenging stories. Each problem in each locality at given time are different. We can see the beach for life is a local youth group working with adults, be part of the bigger civil society group and together join hands to challenge the authorities by using legal system.

The Mother Nature groups' direct actions sent a strong message to public and decision makers to protecting their pristine nature; while it is very risky to oppose such a development project in Cambodia. Still, their actions, such as road blocks, are quite a powerful message itself in bringing many questions to Cambodian society about their government's policy decision-making. To do that the entire community would need to be well-organized, coherent, and committed. Moreover, The Mother Nature also worked with other activists in neighboring countries to raise awareness and bring about the better change, to reach a common understanding and to gain a collective aspiration. The Youth Dream for Future Mekong campaign is a good example of how bringing local voices to address transboundary problems, and that can bring an attention to policy makers, media and public.

To conclude, these three cases share a similar key feature, which is the local people and youth are working together in claiming the right to participation in development and resource management, the right to information, the right to be heard, and the right to safe and clean environment.



Risk management

Before launching an advocacy campaign, everyone must be aware of potential risks; for example, what they are and how we can prevent and minimize them. This is called '**risk management.**' It is a prediction and evaluation of the potential risk present in your campaign and finding ways to avoid or minimize its impact.

Identify risks - ask yourself and your team members at the very start of your advocacy planning to identify potential risks in operating your campaign. Think about barriers and obstacles to success (e.g., any safety and security concerns of the team members, any immoral doings, legal concerns, etc.). Moreover, think about risks specific to girls, boys, men, women, or trans-genderers –is there any risk concerning gender aspect?

Analyze risks - try your best to envision the effect, obstacles and threats that might occur, and have an impact on your activity and due to your activities. These obstacles can be both from internal factors - something you can control (e.g., knowledge, timeframe, financial support etc.) or external factors - something is not under your control (e.g., knowledge, weather, social support, media, political factors, etc.).

Managing risks - this is often about working in partnership as much as possible with other groups and/or organizations. Come up with immediate, short and long-term plans in details to cope with a challenge that may happen.

Tool in risk analysis - Get a wooden Jenga game ready!

- Let participants think of a situation or an event; for example, dating someone, organizing a party etc. Choose one idea and have everyone help discuss the details of the situation.
- Ask each participant to identify what may cause your event to fail. Ask for volunteers to present their ideas one by one, then ask one person to use one hand to pull a block from the Jenga Tower. The first person removes the block on top of the tower. Try this for a few times to make sure everyone understands how the game works.
- Ask the group to think about an actual activity, campaign events in their community/country. Ask each participant to write down a risk of the activity on a sticky note, then start the game with the same rule. Each person presents the risk and remove the block.
- This game would go until the tower collapses or no one can think of any further risks (it is very possible that the facilitator runs this game without the Jenga Tower).
- Facilitator then collects all the sticky notes with risks on it. Open a discussion - what risks do we see, how does it impact our work, can we prevent it or cope with it? It is important to recognize the risks and try to minimize them. How are we going to minimize those risks?

Example of the case for discussion

A 15-year-old girl was sued by gold mining company

Ploy (a pseudonym), a 15-year-old girl, was sued by the gold mining company named Tungkum Company Ltd., in Loei Province, Thailand. In 2015, Thung Kha company filed two lawsuits against a 15-year-old girl “Ploy” and Thai PBS for defamation after speaking on the Thai PBS TV channel that “the river in my community was polluted by gold mining. We can no longer drink and use the water” during an environmental training camp for children in her community where the gold mine operated in Loei Province, Thailand.

Ploy told the media during the suing incident that *“At first, I was so shocked. I cried. I don’t know what to do. I didn’t do anything wrong. I just told them how I feel and I said the truth. Why suing me?”* Ploy and her family were also threatened by local authority and company agencies (see <http://bit.ly/2qbJeQI>).

The school principal of Ploy was also trying to take her to meet with the company lawyer without an informed consent from her parents. Villagers from her village came to the school to protest and stop the school principal from taking the girl to meet the lawyer.

The Civil Society and environmental organizations took a stand and launched a public petition to demand the company to drop a lawsuit against Ploy. The public interest lawyer had provided her legal support during the whole process (see <http://bit.ly/2qQcsYd>).

In June 2016, the Department of Juvenile Protection rejected the lawsuit against Ploy and on 16 November, the criminal charges were dismissed and the court found that there was sufficient evidence indicating that the toxic contamination of the water was due to the gold mining facility.

Guiding activities:

Provide the risk grid (see page 88) to analyze this case studies. Trainers may have the participants work in pairs or smaller groups to discuss about the risk management. Then try to bring them to think about how important it is to promote and protect child participation.

Also, think about if there is any resources, organizations, networks, and tips –that can support children to do the safe advocacy campaign, for example:

- Does your country have the Child Protection Act? (Some countries do not have this act),
- Are there any regional networks and organizations working on human rights protection, such as, the network of Mekong Youth Assembly (MYA) in your country?
- Are there any international networks and organizations working on human rights protection that can provide legal support to children, this includes children groups who would like to conduct a human rights workshop?
- Are there any opportunities in conducting an advocacy campaign together with other human rights-related networks from inside and outside one’s community and/or with organizations in other countries?
- What are the alternative strategies in campaigning? For instance, a soft or positive advocacy campaign that promotes the ECR, provides educational information, raises public awareness on ECR issues, rather than protests.



(Photo credit: 'We are standing for Ecological Child Rights,' by Mekong Youth Assembly.)

Design your advocacy campaign

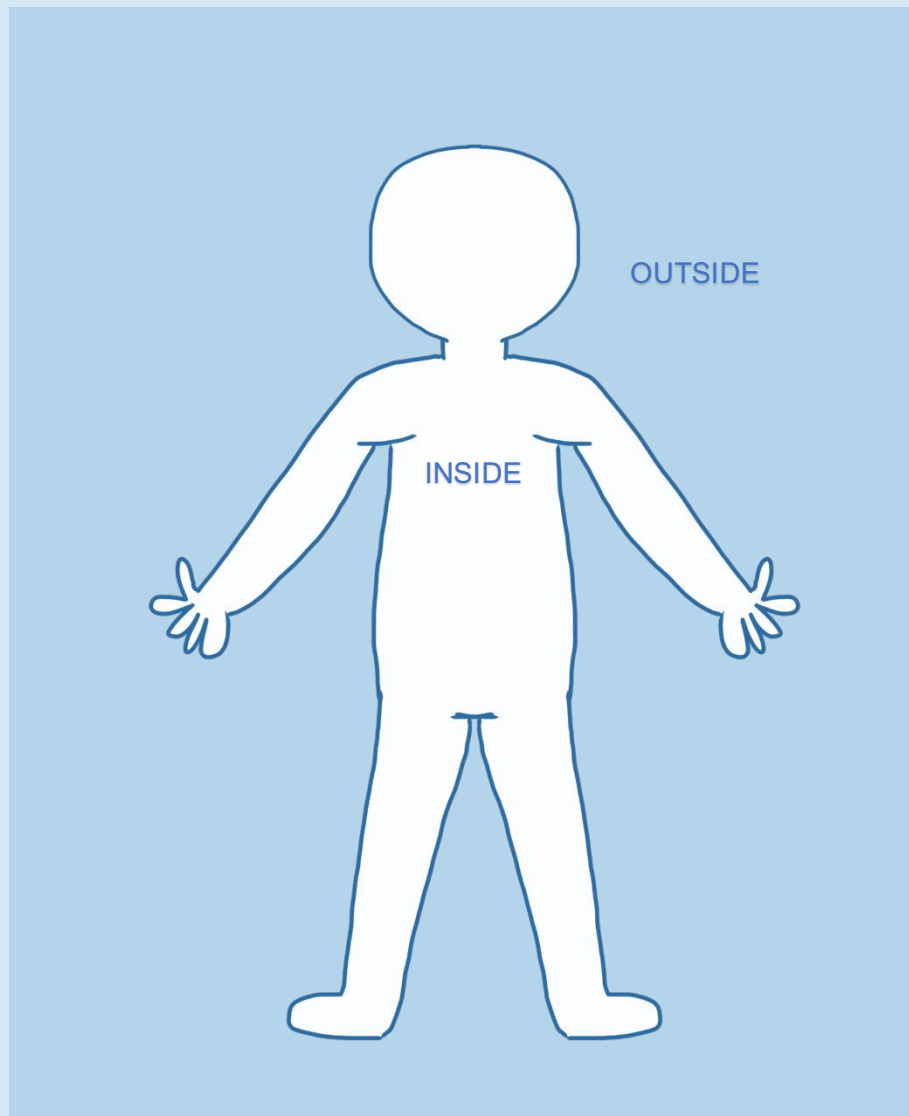
Bring back the paper lists of what participants would like to do to either promote or protect the ecological child rights (ECR). Let's further discuss which plan they can do together given within a limited time and resources to come up with a campaign idea.

This session of designing a campaign should be about 2-3 hours, depending on the number of your participants as big group would need to divide into smaller groups that need more time to discuss and present their campaign.

Before getting started (15 mins), the facilitator put out a large sheet of paper, ask a couple volunteers to draw an outline of their body. And ask these following questions, it aims for self-discovering and empowering participants to mobilize and claim their rights to participation:

→ **Inside the outline**, ask participants to reflect and draw/write their internal assets. What personal attributes do they bring to the table in pursuing their hopes, in reaching their goal in this campaign? For example, their skills (writing, researching, singing), knowledge, personal characteristics (funny, passionate, friendly, etc.).

→ **Outside the outline**, ask them what their external assets are; who do they know in the community? What resources and support do they have that can help them in a campaign? Who are their networks?



Then, divide participants into two working groups or everyone can work together as one big group. Each group will be working on their **advocacy campaign plan** of their chosen issue. They will identify:

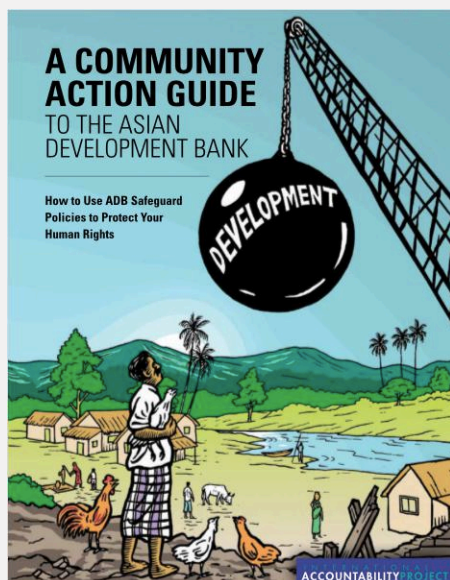
- a. Objectives
- b. Target audience
- c. Key message
- d. Activities
- e. Potential partners (groups, organizations, institutes, etc.)
- f. Required resources (information, materials, contacts, etc.)
- g. Potential risks
- h. Budget

Use these 10 Questions for your campaign planning:

- (1) What do you want to change (the main cause/ chosen issue)?
- (2) Who are the people you want to influence (target audience)?
- (3) How do you want them to change or do (objective)?
- (4) How and when do you reach them (communication, media, and timeframe)?
- (5) What do you want to say to them (key message)?
- (6) What do you have to contribute, what can you help the campaign?
- (7) Who agrees with you? + Who can help you (partners)?
- (8) What are the risks to you, others and the campaign?
- (9) How can you limit the risk?
- (10) What's next? How do you know you are making progress? → Reflection

In addition, trainers may use the '**Advocacy Delivery Grid**' (see page 87) and the '**Risk Assessment Grid**' (see page 88) to facilitate this session, this should take about 1.5 hours. Then, every group presents their campaign plan to their peers and trainers, 15 minutes for each group. A trainer facilitates the time and a discussion of comments and feedback to help improve the plan, within another 15 minutes.

Ideally, trainers assist the participants to execute and launch their campaign to the public, either by contacting journalists or through websites and social networking media sites (depending on the target audience). It is important for the youths to express themselves and to voice their opinions; not only in the workshop, but to the public. If doable, the organizers shall contact some media outlets in advance.



For more information and details please see 'A Community Action Guide' by International Accountability Project (2013), **Part 3: Community Action for Justice and Rights-based Development** (page 108). Download the guide at: bit.ly/ADBGuide.



Evaluation and follow up plan:

Lastly, the organizer and trainers are obligated to ask all participants to provide feedback either non-anonymously and/or anonymously about the workshop. Everyone must sit in a circle and share their opinions and thoughts about the workshop and what can be improved.

The host organization may also provide an evaluation question paper for everyone to fill out. The trainers may also contact some participants after the workshop to ask them of, to what extent, they have applied the workshop content into their activism work.



Tips for facilitation in a workshop for children

These are some techniques for getting children's attention and keeping it. One of the most important parts of successful facilitation is getting a group of children's attention and engaging them with what you have to say. First impressions do matter and the better we are at getting a group's attention and sparking their interest, the better chance we have of keeping it! Below are some techniques for starting your activity right. (By the way, all of these techniques work for adults too!).

<p>Learn their Names</p> <p>Two things happen when you call a child's name. First, they feel cared for. And second, they pay attention. There is a big difference in how someone pays attention when they hear "Hey Jack" instead of "Hey You." <i>Facilitator Challenge:</i> when you meet a new group, see how fast you can learn everyone's name.</p>	<p>Start with a surprise</p> <p>Change things up and think about what you could do at the very beginning that might surprise them. If it's unexpected, they will pay attention. You'll also spark their curiosity.</p>	<p>Just start doing it. If you are playing a game or teaching a lesson, just start by doing it. Take out the soccer ball and start passing it to the children. children like to play and to be involved. And many children are more comfortable doing things than they are talking. There are often situations when we spend time explaining what we are doing when we could just jump in and start doing it!</p>
<p>Use props. Sometimes there is no better way to get a child's attention than to wear something totally unexpected and fun, or to have some object as part of your facilitation. Everyone wonders what "IT" is for or they laugh and wonder why you are wearing such a funny hat or shoes.</p>	<p>Ask a question. It's important to show the children that we value their opinion. Second, we encourage participation and attention, since everyone is going to be thinking of what to say if they have to answer the question.</p>	<p>Get a volunteer. Children, especially teens, pay more attention when it's one of their peers involved. If there is something that you can do at the beginning of the lesson or activity that requires a volunteer, try it.</p>
<p>Ask for help. Plan to start your activity or lesson with something that you cannot do by yourself. This could be lifting something or setting up the game. The children won't know exactly what it is they are helping with but they will be much more curious about what it is now that you've got them helping.</p>	<p>Use action instead of words. Children are used to adults talking. When we use sounds or actions instead of words they often pay more attention. For example, ask the group to clap 3 times, the ask it again by changing number of claps. As a few more times and pretty soon you have everyone clapping, And paying attention to what you have to say next.</p>	<p>Make them laugh. Do you have an appropriate and funny joke? Is there a story or skit you can do that might make them laugh? Laughter relaxes people. It actually helps them be more open-minded which make them more likely to pay attention and be curious.</p>

Source: Association of Hole in the Wall Camps.

Tips for trainers and facilitators

Q: How do I get the funding or support to organize a workshop?

A: You may write a concept note or a proposal paper to apply for a grant. Many organizations provide funding for youth organizations to host a workshop. However, try to think out of the box; you can find some support and resources within your community. You may ask a local religious leader/monk/priest to organize your workshop at the temple/church at no cost. You may ask each participant to bring some vegetables, dried fish, rice or anything from home to the workshop and cook some lunches together. It is very important for the whole community to feel that they are part of an event like this! Make sure your workshop is not sponsor-driven.

Q: Not many people applied to join our workshop, what else can be done?

A: You may extend the application deadline. Second, focus on your target groups for your workshop, then make a direct contact to those organizations and networks to let them know that the workshop is still accepting applications. You may also recruit your applicants through nomination from the organizations and networks you work with.

Q: If a participant ignores the guidelines and does something else, what should I do?

A: It is best to invite the participant to have a private talk. By asking why the person does not want to follow the workshop guidelines or fully participate with the group. You might find something was disturbing them for personal reasons that organizer should be aware of. Be open-minded and put the best interest of the child first.

Q: Some children show up in the middle of training and want to join, what should I do?

A: If this happens, invite them to join the workshop. Stay open-minded, as this might show that what you are doing is interesting for children. Invite them to join activities that they want to join. But to avoid confusion, if they want to join the whole workshop, then you can have a small talk with them, and explain briefly to them about the purpose and the activities in the workshop. Ask why they want to participate and whether they understand what you are doing at the workshop. Then, let's see if they still want to join the whole workshop. It is great to have keen participants joining in the whole process of the workshop.

Q: A participant wants to leave in the middle of the training, how do I handle this?

A: Invite the participant to have a private meeting. Ask them why they want to leave, is it because of the training, or did something happens back at their home? Be supportive. If a participant wants to leave, let the person go. Contact and ask their parents nicely to please let the organizers know when they have arrived home safely.

Q: Participants are very active and all the activities were completed quickly. What can I do?

A: As a trainer, it is always best to be over-prepared. Basically, you can ask participants what they want to do with the time and decide together, or if you have some activities in mind you can propose something relevant to previous activities, or you can even start linking to tomorrow's activities. Some wrap-up activities, such as listing down new words they have learned, or asking for that day activities feedback can be useful.

Q: Why do many participants look so tired? What can I do?

A: You may want to re-assess your activities. Give them a break or add some calm and quiet activities. It does not matter if get all activities done. What is more important is what your participants have learned and how they learned it. Take care of their health and feelings. You can have a long first day and relaxing second-day or another way around, it depends on the energy flow of the children.

Q: If a participant seems to be a bit judgmental or discriminatory of other peers and expresses that frequently, what should I do?

A: From the interview process, the interviewer might know a little bit of the characteristics of each participant. To prevent this (as much as possible) the training team should inform participants clearly about how to respect each other before coming to the workshop. Trainers can also use a creative activity to help participants to get to know each other (of their different backgrounds, cultures, genders, etc.) before starting the workshop.

The importing thing is to set the rules on a big paper that everyone can see all the time during training, this could help participants be more aware of this issue. If this judgmental expression happens suddenly, it is important for trainers to emphasize the rules and address the whole group, not to that person; otherwise, the one who is discriminated or the one who is being discriminatory of others would feel bad for the whole training.

Q: There is a participant who is very dominant and interrupts other people while they are sharing opinions, what should I do?

A: As a trainer, you should encourage others to speak up, and simply tell that person to give others the opportunity to speak. For a big group discussion, before each participant expresses their ideas, you can ask everyone to write down their thoughts on a small paper (or sticky note) and hold onto it, then make sure everyone gets a chance to share their ideas on the paper with the group.

Q: If a participant starts building an intimate relationship with another trainee, what should I do?

A: Relationships between humans happen naturally, including among young people. We should be aware and that is the best we can. However, if a person feels very uncomfortable to be treated a certain way from another peer, or they hardly pay attention or fully participate in the workshop, you might have to interfere. Reassure them that intimate feeling is very normal, it happens, but for the time being, fully engage in the workshop and get to know other trainees are very important as well.

Q: If there are any inappropriate behaviors such as sexual harassment, of if someone makes another person feel uncomfortable or offended, what should I do?

A: You may talk to the person in private about the situation. It is important that everyone can express themselves freely but with respect and consideration for other people's well-being.

Q: If a debate heats up leading to a conflict, what should I do?

A: As long as the conflict can be managed in a non-violent way, you may not need to interfere but simply be a good moderator. A good moderator manages time so everyone is able to speak, encourages all parties to be patient while listening to others who are disagreeing with them, and encourages everyone to back up their argument with data and evidence rather than a personal attack. Also, the moderator should to bring closure to the debate.

Q: If any of the activities or discussions bring up any trauma or intense emotional response from one of participants, what should I do?

A: Firstly, **empowering** - make sure the child-friendly methods/approaches are in place. Then take a further step of **screening** – the workshop facilitator, the team and the Child Protection committees are on duty and observe the sign of trauma or intense emotional responses of the participants as early as possible, such as keep quiet, tight grips, scratch or show some kinds of aggressive behaviors, and other signs that different from one's normal behavior. Two representatives from the Child Protection committee can approach the person and invite him/her to leave the group to change the environment.

Supporting - clam them down, be with them, and talk to the child when they are ready.

- **Ask:** What happened? If you'd like and feel comfortable to do so - you can share your feelings with us.
- **Listen:** Make eye contact, let your face shows you are listening, don't do anything else while the child is talking
- **Understand:** Share your thoughts of what is happening to the person (paraphrase what the child said), and ask the person to reaffirm anything you are confused by or misunderstood, must check with the child. If the child need the one they trust such as their chaperone from their organization or community, you may call them to come to support the child.

Bring back better - after a child is calm and ready to be back to the group, you must make sure that the environment of the group is also ready for him/her. The facilitator can also continue the activity with no need to mention about what happened, then make sure that all children are included in that activities.

Alternatively, it depends on a certain circumstance, the facilitator may ask a permission from the person who has been through some difficulties whether he/she would like to share the feelings with the group, and/or may receive a supportive activity/action from their peers. Such as, giving the person some flowers, saying some encouraging words, etc.

Report and refer – in this case, the severe trauma or emotional response that the team cannot handle, please refer them to a professional nearby.

Special safety considerations - it is very important that the mental health and psychosocial support are included in the risk assessment and reporting system as agreed on the Child Protection's Code of Conduct, and having the Child Protection committees on duty.



(Photo credit: 'Youth Power,' by Mueda Nawanant.)

Training Materials

Relevant articles in the 1990 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) to the concept of 'Ecological Child Rights,' by Mekong Youth Assembly. See the full Convention at: bit.ly/CRC1990.

Article 1

Definition of the child

The Convention defines a 'child' as a person below the age of 18.

Article 2

Non-discrimination

The Convention applies to all children, whatever their race, religion or abilities; whatever they think or say, whatever type of family they come from. It doesn't matter where children live, what language they speak, what their parents do, whether they are boys or girls, what their culture is, whether they have a disability or whether they are rich or poor. No child should be treated unfairly on any basis.

Article 3

Best interests of the child

The best interests of children must be the primary concern in making decisions that may affect them. All adults should do what is best for children. When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children. This particularly applies to budget, policy and law makers.

Article 6

Survival and development

Children have the right to live. Governments should ensure that children survive and develop healthily.

Article 12

Respect for the views of the child

When adults are making decisions that affect children, children have the right to say what they think should happen and have their opinions taken into account.

Article 13

Freedom of expression

Children have the right to get and share information, as long as the information is not damaging to them or others. In exercising the right to freedom of expression, children have the responsibility to also respect the rights, freedoms and reputations of others. The freedom of expression includes the right to share information in any way they choose, including by talking, drawing or writing.

Article 17

Access to information; mass media

Children have the right to get information that is important to their health and well-being. Right Holders should encourage mass media – radio, television, newspapers and Internet content sources and etc. – to provide information that children can understand and to not promote materials that could harm children. Mass media should particularly be encouraged to supply information in languages that minority and indigenous children can understand. Children should also have access to child friendly material.

Article 19

Protection from all forms of violence

Children have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, physically or mentally. Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect from anyone else who hold and accountability to their rights.

Article 24

Health and health services

Children have the right to good quality health care – the best healthcare possible – to safe drinking water, nutritious food, a clean and safe environment, and information to help them stay healthy. Rich countries should help poorer countries achieve this.

Article 26

Social security

Children – either through their guardians or directly – have the right to help from the government if they are poor or in need.

Article 27

Adequate standard of living

Children have the right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and mental needs. Governments should help families and guardians who cannot afford to provide this, particularly with regard to food, clothing and housing.

Article 29

Goals of education

Children's education should develop each child's personality, talents and abilities to the fullest. It should encourage children to respect others, human rights and their own and other cultures. It should also help them learn to live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people. Children have a particular responsibility to respect the rights their parents, and education should aim to develop respect for the values and culture of their communities. The Convention address in the context of their society and existing laws, such matters infringe upon other rights protected by the Convention.

Article 30

Children of minorities/ indigenous groups

Minority or indigenous children have the right to learn about and practice their own culture, language and religion. The right to practice one's own culture, language and religion applies to everyone; the Convention here highlights this right in instances where the practices are not shared by the majority of people in the country.

Article 31

Leisure, play and culture

Children have the right to relax and play, and to join in a wide range of good environmental, cultural, artistic and other recreational activities.

Article 32

Child labour

The government should protect children from work that is dangerous or might harm their health or their education. While the Convention protects children from harmful and exploitative work, there is nothing in it that prohibits parents from expecting their children to help out at home in ways that are safe and appropriate to their age. If children help out in a family farm or business, the tasks they do be safe and suited to their level of development and comply with national labour laws. Children's work should not jeopardize any of their other rights, including the right to education, or the right to relaxation and play.

Article 36

Other forms of exploitation

Children should be protected from any activity that takes advantage of them or could harm their welfare and development.

Article 41

Respect for superior national standards

If the laws of a country provide better protection of children's rights than the articles in this Convention, those laws should apply.

Article 42

Knowledge of rights

Governments should make the Convention known to adults and children. Adults should help children learn about their rights, too.

The Concept of Ecological Child Rights by Mekong Youth Assembly

(See the original version here: bit.ly/MekongYouth_ECR)

Worldwide, people are experiencing the negative impact of water and food shortages, soil, air and water pollution and natural disasters; many impacts are also crossed-border. Many children, particularly in developing countries, are prevented from growing up in a healthy environment: every year three million under-five-year-olds die of environment related illnesses. Thus, the voices of children must be heard because policy-making on environment affecting them, and it is about their future. They will also inherit the responsibility of looking after the earth.

The first international environmental conference in Stockholm (1972), the international community declared that “man has the fundamental right to freedom, equality and adequate conditions of life, in an environment of a quality that permits a life of dignity and well-being, and he bears a solemn responsibility to protect and improve the environment for present and future generations” (Principle 1 of the Stockholm Declaration).

Moreover, the first Earth Summit in Rio (1992), states emphasized the significance of procedural rights for the protection of the environment, that is, the involvement in environmental decision-making as well as access to information and remedies (Principle 10) in environmental affairs.

To make effective environmental protection through procedural human and child rights, it is necessary to mobilize the youth and children that means to consider the creativity and ideas, then encourage them to force global partnership in order to achieve sustainable development and ensure the better for all (principle 21).

Though the UNCRC does not explicitly mention Ecological Children's Rights, they can be deduced from a number of articles (articles 3, 6 and 24). Article 3 mentions that all procedures and actions concerning children are to consider ‘the best interests of the child’.

Article 6 manifests the right of each child to survival and development, and article 24 emphasizes the right of each child to achieve the highest possible level of health (paragraph c states that when fighting illnesses or malnutrition, environmental factors have to be considered; paragraph e constitutes that in education the children are to be taught respect towards their natural environment).

Fulfillment requires a certain quality of the environment and the preservation of natural resources. As the general principles of the CRC should guarantee that environmental decision-making takes into account of children and their rights (participation, non-discrimination, best interest- principle, rights to life, survival and development). Including the procedural rights (e.g. right to be heard), distinct needs of children, including to play in natural environments and experience the animal world.

The concept of ecological child rights therefore aiming to shed light on the interdependence of environmental and child rights protection. We call upon the international community to explicitly recognize the right to a safe, healthy and ecologically sound environment, thereby acknowledging the relevance of environmental destruction in the context of child rights protection in development projects.

Lastly, after protection measures or other forms of disaster prevention also lead to displacements and forced evictions. Families thereby often lose their access to natural resources. Displacements have particularly serious consequences for children, because family stability, their livelihoods and their rights to education and health are threatened. Hence, the displacement has to be taken into a serious consideration and not simply a remedy for protection of child rights.

The goal must be to finally end discrimination against future generations and their needs in the form of legally guaranteed rights and other institutional safeguards.

For Day 1, Activity B) Storytelling - animals and fish stories”

Following stories are retrieved from this book *“Plants, Animals, Salt and Spirits: How People Live with and Talk about the Environment in Rural Cambodia, Laos and Thailand”* (March, 2015), written and translated by Chaiyarak Bampen, Syvongsay Changpitikoun, Toshiyuki Doi, Satomi Higashi, Yuka Kiguchi, Leakhana Kol and Tomohiro Oh. Edited by Toshiyuki Doi.



(Photo credit: 'Muang Naoi, Laos.' by Eric Miramon.)

Story #1 Origin of Elephants

Elephants were originally relatives to humans. They were not born in the present shape of elephants. So they still love humans and are willing to be caught by humans. They have lived with and served humans until now.

Once upon a time, a group of villagers went fishing. They poisoned fish so that they could easily catch them. They collected the poisoned fish. They all ate the fish, except for one woman, who had a baby and was busy breastfeeding. She did not eat the fish.

After having eaten the fish, the villagers were transformed into elephants. They could still understand and speak the human language, however. They went back to the village and told their families why they had become elephants. They then continued to live with their families as before.

Brahma remained angry with the villagers who had poisoned the river and become elephants. He took a pestle and hit the mouths of the elephants. This made them unable to speak. However, they were still able to understand the human language as before.

They still ate rice and soup and drank alcohol as humans, too. They had the knowledge of traditional medicine and led their families to find medical herbs. They also dragged logs, helped humans in agricultural work, and carried them from place to place. Sometimes, they even took care of their human families.

The elephants also gave birth to baby elephants. Many years went by. The next generation of elephants did not know about their origin. They did not get along well with their human relatives anymore. So, they went to live in a forest and started eating tree leaves instead of rice and soup.

Today, when humans need to find elephants for help in agricultural work, they have to hunt for them in the forest. As elephants, have originated from humans, they can still eat human food. They regard humans as their master and obey and serve them. They accompany humans to catch young elephants, too.

Story #2 History of Keo Seima District

A long time ago, villagers found glassy rocks on a mountain which looked like crystal and glimmered in multiple colors like a diamond. They were beautiful. The villagers called the rock keo seima, or magic glass.

The area on the mountain was where villagers grazed their cattle. The cattle would never get lost. The villagers always prayed to the spirit to take care of their cattle. Whenever there were any lost cattle, the villagers prayed to the spirit for their return, and a few days later the cattle would come back. So, the area became a sacred place for the villagers. When the villagers became ill, they offered pig or chicken blood, burned incense and candles, and wished for happiness. The area became the place where the villagers held religious ceremonies and celebrations.

The villagers of that generation were ancestors of the Bunong. At night, virtuous villagers dreamed of the spirit who told them about magic glass coming from a rock, and how they could find and collect it.

The villagers then went to collect magic glass. Some placed it on a shelf at home, and others kept it in a bag to worship. Those who had magic glass always enjoyed good luck, not only for themselves, but also for their entire family, and even their animals.

When there was a ceremony in the village, those who had magic glass brought it to the sacred place to worship. After finishing the ceremony, they took it back to their house. They named the place where they had collected magic glass as Keo Seima. It was situated in the forest at Prey Ochhloung. Later, the place came to be called Keo Seima District. The forest is now in Sre Preah Commune, Keo Seima District in Mondulkiri Province. During the regime of Pol Pot, all the magic glass rocks were confiscated and therefore can no longer be seen these days.

Story #3 The Owl and the Deer

In Pakbeng District of Oudomxay Province in Northern Laos, the lifestyle of the Kmhmu' people is based on agriculture, particularly rice production in swidden fields, which is supplemented with hunting, fishing and gathering in the forests and rivers. In the folktales of the Kmhmu', listeners experience a glimpse of the world that surrounds these people who have deep connections with their natural environment of forests and rivers, and the inner workings of their lives.

One day, an owl invited a deer to go fishing with him. When they reached the river together, the owl chose a small side stream and the deer chose a larger one, and they used woven baskets to scoop up fish from their respective streams. The deer caught lots of fish, crayfish and other things.

The owl, however, did not catch anything at all. The owl, who was getting hungry, turned to the deer and said, "Hey, Mr. Deer. If you go upstream, you can catch even more fish." The deer said, "Really? In that case, I will go up a little and come back in a while."

The deer left his catch behind and went upstream. When the deer had gone far enough that he could no longer be seen, the owl ate up all the fish the deer had gathered. When the deer returned, he could not find any of the catch he had painstakingly gathered.

The only thing that remained was the crayfish that the owl had left uneaten. Realizing that he had been deceived, the deer stamped around in a rage. When he did that, he accidentally caught his hoof on a pumpkin vine, and the pumpkin went rolling down the slope.

The pumpkin's course took it straight to where an old woman was tending a fire to boil water. The pumpkin hit the pot, knocking it over and spilled boiling water onto the old woman's legs. The old woman, upset at having been showered with hot water, beat on a drum that was nearby.

A chicken, surprised at the sound of the drum, ran around crying out loudly, and knocked over a pole (used for making holes in the soil when sowing rice) that had been left standing. The falling pole hit a snake. Startled, the snake took off in a mad dash. The panicking snake slithered over an anthill, demolishing it.

The ants in the ruined anthill came rushing out all at once at a pig that was nearby and bit him in the mouth. Bitten by the ants, the pig tried to shake them off, and rubbed his mouth on a banana tree. The pig rubbed his mouth so hard that he knocked the banana tree over. A bat sleeping in the banana tree was startled by this.

Flying off in a panic, the bat flew into an elephant's ear. In turn, the elephant was startled. He kicked a branch that had fallen from a tree and sent it flying. The fallen branch pierced the eyes of a dragon-child that was swimming in the river. Upon hearing her child crying because of his injured eyes, the mother dragon came rushing out in a panic.

The mother dragon said, "Good Heavens! What's the matter?" "A tree branch came flying and poked my eyes," said the young dragon. "Mr. Tree Branch! Why did you go and pierce my child's eyes?" The tree branch said, "Because I was kicked by the elephant. S, I went flying." "Mr. Elephant! Why did you kick the tree branch?" "Because the bat suddenly flew into my ear, and I was startled."

"Mr. Bat! Why did you fly into the elephant's ear?" "Because the banana tree in which I was hanging fell over." "Mr. Banana Tree! Why did you fall over?" "Because the pig rubbed his mouth on me." "Mr. Pig! Why did you rub your mouth on the banana tree?" "Because the ants were biting me in the mouth."

"Ants! Why were you biting the pig?" "Because the snake destroyed our anthill." "Mr. Snake! Why did you destroy the anthill?" "Because I was suddenly struck by a falling pole." "Mr. Pole! Why did you fall over on the snake?" "Because the chicken bumped into me."

"Mrs. Chicken! Why did you bump into the pole?" "Because the old woman suddenly started beating the drum." "Old Woman! Why did you beat the drum?" "Because I was surprised when the pot overturned, pouring hot water on my legs." "Mr. Pot! Why did you overturn?" "Because the pumpkin came rolling down the slope."

"Mr. Pumpkin! Why did you roll down the slope?" "Because the deer uprooted my vine." "Mr. Deer! Why did you uproot the pumpkin vine?" "Because the owl stole my catch and I got angry." Finally, the mother dragon arrived at the owl. "Mr. Owl! Why did you steal the deer's catch?"

The owl could not think of a clever explanation. Unable to respond, he looked all around with his big eyes. The dragon said, "You are to blame. Because of you, my child's eyes were damaged. To replace them, I will take your eyes." The dragon pulled out the owl's eyeballs and placed them in her child's sockets. To replace the owl's eyes, she used the seeds of a fruit called *salaen*, which allowed him to see only at night. This is how the crafty owl lost his ability to see by day.



For Forest Chapter Activity: Let's adopt the Ecological Child Rights (ECR) Mindset

Case studies on ECR in the Mekong Region are collected by Mekong Youth Assembly.

Case Study 1: Blood Sugar - Sugarcane Plantation in Koh Kong, Cambodia

In August 2006, the Cambodian government granted economic concessions in Koh Kong Province to Koh Kong Plantation and Koh Kong Sugar Industry, both companies are jointly owned by the Thai company Khon Kaen Sugar Industry, Taiwanese Ve Wong Corporation and Cambodian Senator Ly Yong Phat.

About 4,000 villagers claim that they were violently evicted from their lands and relocated involuntarily to make room for a sugar plantation run by the Koh Kong companies. The villagers claim that no consultation between the villagers and the companies prior to the grant of concessions; and the land transfer process is illegal.

The Koh Kong companies entered a 5-year contract with the UK-headquartered company Tate & Lyle for sale of sugar from these plantations in 2009. In February 2007, the villagers filed a complaint against Koh Kong Plantation and Koh Kong Sugar Industry in Koh Kong Provincial Court, seeking cancellation of the concession contract.

In September 2012, a judge ruled that the court did not have the power to receive the land disputes, and transferred the case to the Cadastral Commission. Following this decision, villagers held talks with the Ministry of Justice to have the case sent back to the court on the grounds that their claim is about the legality of the concession rather than land ownership.

To date neither the Ministry nor the Cadastral Commission has taken action. In June 2015, the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand released a report in which it recognizes that the human rights violations had occurred at the site of the sugar plantation. In March 2013, 200 villagers filed a complaint in England against Tate & Lyle and T&L Sugars Limited (a subsidiary of American Sugar Refining). The plaintiffs maintain that they remain the legal owners of the land on which the Koh Kong companies grew sugar.

Therefore, they claim that under Cambodian law they are the rightful owners of the crops grown on their land. The villagers are claiming compensation for the profit from selling the sugar. The defendants argue that they do not have knowledge of the facts asserted by the plaintiffs and seek to be declared the rightful owners of the sugar purchased from the Koh Kong companies. The lawsuit is ongoing.

Impacts to Children. A Human Rights assessment called “Bitter Sweet Harvest” found that adverse impacts to children’s living conditions, access to education, and mental and physical health were reported. Children are also routinely subjected to economic exploitation as the result of their families’ loss of land.

Children in all research areas suffered from a retrogression in their enjoyment of the right to education since industrial sugar was introduced to their communities. Children living in resettlement areas cited the long distances and dangerous routes to get to school. The Group Leader confirmed that: “The school is a 3 to 4 hour walk. Villagers don’t have money for bikes.”

Distance is an especially daunting obstacle for handicapped or disabled children. One 17-year-old boy from Pis had an accident a few years ago and cannot walk. There are no services in the resettlement village to help a disabled person. Since the school is located some distance away, he quit studying. He stays home to take care of his siblings while his parents work on the plantation.

With reduced household income and food security, parents are forced to reduce or eliminate school attendance. Many households reported greater difficulties paying for education-related expenses such as materials, informal teacher fees and uniforms. Families interviewed in Oddar Meanchey said they stopped sending their kids to school after Grade 4 because they cannot afford the costs.

A mother living at Bos relocation site said: “It really impacted on my children’s education after my land was grabbed by the company. I had to force my two children to quit studying and start working due to the financial problem as well as the far distance. My children also seem no longer to have the feeling to study because they saw the situation in the family, lack of food and income. My 15-year-old child needs to work for others. And my biggest son needs to immigrate to Thailand for earning money.”

Families at the Pis relocation site said that children cannot attend school and must start to work from the age of 12 to help their families. Children in all areas assisted their families by earning an income or by working at home. Children within households experiencing financial difficulties in turn felt obligated to help their parents and were more reluctant to study. The children are angry because their parents lost their land. Their education is affected. They stop studying in order to help their families resolve their day-to-day living.

Child labor on the sugar plantations was widely reported in all areas. Children as young as 8 years old in Koh Kong regularly work alongside family members or alone cutting, tying and carrying cane bundles or in second planter/picker, sprayer and grass cutter positions. Children in Koh Kong are paid the same as adults: 100 riel or 2 US cents per bundle. They can earn about 75 cents delivering roughly 30 bundles per day.

The work is strenuous: one bundle of low quality sugarcane weighs 10 kg and a bundle of best quality cane weighs 40 kg. The assessment team confirmed 85 children under the age of 16 working on the Koh Kong sugar plantation. The vast majority of these are under age 15, and 13 of the child laborers are only 11 years old or younger. The

children come primarily from Chouk and Chi Kha villages, where their families lost their land and livelihoods to the sugar concessions.

In Kampong Speu, children of both sexes aged 12 to 17 work on the plantation. Pek Nim, the Amliang Commune Chief, reported that boys and girls work all day for 3 USD doing work that is “beyond their physical ability and strength.” Several parents expressed concern about the long-term impacts of sugar development on their children’s future.

An older man from O’Pralov said: “Everywhere I go I feel sorrowful and hopeless. We think about the poverty we face. If things are this bad now, what will happen to my children when I die? A man from Pis lamented that when his children marry, he will have no land to give them: This is tradition. The land I was given by the company is too small – how can we give them land?”

Another man responded: “Our children were born here, but now that our land is gone they will have no way to make a living. They have no choice but to work for the sugar company.”

Case Study 2: Klity Creek Village - Lead Contamination in Kanchanaburi, Thailand

The village of Klity, 68 miles west of Bangkok, is a Karen indigenous community which has long suffered from poisoning related to lead sediments and contamination in the creek near the village. A lead mine operates and discharges waste directly into this creek, from which the villagers collect their drinking water. It is threatening families in the village with serious and irreversible health problems, including development problem, mental disability, blindness in some cases, as they are exposed to lead through water, soil, fish, and vegetables.

Lower Klity Creek is home to about 400 ethnic Karen people, most of whom are farmers of rice, cassava, and vegetables. Earlier, on January 10, 2013, the supreme administrative court of the country had ordered the Thai government to clean up Klity Creek. However, even two years later, the government has failed to clean the creek. Non-profit Human Right Watch (HRW), in its recently-released 32-page report, describes how the Thai government has failed to clean the creek in the last 16 years.

A lead-processing factory was begun run in 11 km upstream of Lower Klity Creek. The factory was run by Lead Concentrate (Thailand) Co Ltd. The factory, which operated since the mid-1960s, was ordered to shut down in 1998. But its toxic legacy remained and kept haunting the villagers. Residents suffered the symptoms of chronic lead poisoning, such as abdominal pain, fatigue, headaches, and mood changes.

Holding Thailand’s Pollution Control Department responsible for “delaying” cleaning of the creek, the supreme administrative court had ordered the department to pay a total of nearly four million baht, or US \$125,000 in compensation that would be distributed among the 22 plaintiffs who had fallen prey to lead contamination.

In a historic judgment, the court had also ordered the government to clean up the creek. The government, however, pressed for natural rehabilitation, which could take from between 50 to 100 years, Arpa Wangkiat, College of Engineering Rangsit University told HRW. The Impacts of lead contamination to children in Lower Klity Creek village - “Tears of the daughter of the mountain”.

“Almost people including children have been contained lead toxic in their blood and bodies (dangerous levels) which affected to their health, and mental and physical abilities. Specifically, for children, the impacts to their learning, brain and some newborns were taken birth and died suddenly” said Mick, a Thai student from the EarthRights International of Mekong School Program.

The ingestion of high levels of lead can cause brain, liver, kidney, nerve, and stomach damage as well as anemia, coma, convulsions, and even death. Children and pregnant women are particularly susceptible, and high levels of lead exposure can cause permanent intellectual and developmental disabilities, including reading and learning disabilities, behavioral problems, attention problems, as well as hearing loss and disruption in the development of visual and motor functioning.

Children who had elevated lead levels did not receive follow-up medical care. Many villagers told Human Right Watch that public health authorities simply stopped performing local blood tests for lead by 2008. Today, the Thai public health authorities have advised individuals in the village to stop consuming water, fish, and aquatic animals from the creek.

Children bear the brunt. The most sensitive targets for lead toxicity are children's developing nervous systems, the hematological and cardiovascular systems, and the kidneys. Some residents told HRW that development of their children is slow. Pregnant women and children are particularly vulnerable to lead poisoning. In pregnant women, it can cause premature birth, low birth weight, or damage the foetus' developing brain.

Inadequate medical attention. Despite knowing the hazardous effect of lead in the creek, the government response to confirmed lead exposure has been inadequate, finds HRW. In 2000, a non-governmental organization, the Karen Studies and Development Center and later the Ministry of Public Health, arranged treatment for lead poisoning for some individuals, especially with elevated blood-lead levels.

Experts recommended chelation therapy when a child is found with a test result of greater than or equal to 45 micrograms per deciliter of lead in blood, but now lower because the chelation is more effective. Chelation therapy is a medical procedure that involves the administration of chelating agents to remove heavy metals from the body.

Moreover, Mick emphasized that normal children should go to school, but some of them lost the chance to attend school because their incomplete physical abilities. He mentioned innocently that the children in Lower Klity Creek village love river and swimming, but because of the river is polluted heavily by lead contamination, so they cannot swim enjoyably.

Case Study 3: Lower Sesan 2 Dam - The benefit for who? In Stung Treng, Cambodia

The Lower Sesan 2 Dam is currently under construction at the junction between the Srepok and Sesan rivers in Stung Treng province, northeastern Cambodia. The dam is up to 480 MW, 75-meter-high and 6 km in length. The Sesan River is a major Cambodia tributary of the Mekong, the two rivers joining in Stung Treng province where the provincial capital of the same name is located.

In 2012, the project is carried out by Hydropower Lower Sesan 2 Co. Ltd., a joint company of the Royal Group of Cambodia and China's Hydrolangang Ienergy Co.Ltd, and EVN International Joint Stock Company (EVNI) holds a 10% of nominal stake of the project.

Tens of thousands of people who are expected to be negatively impacted by the project, and options for dam developers and the government of Cambodia to uphold the rights of local people. As the dam would be built just downstream from the confluence of the Srepok River, thus blocking two of the largest rivers in the Mekong River Basin, and causing serious negative environmental impacts.

The Sesan 2 dam, if built, can be expected to cause the following impacts. Thousands of people would have to be relocated as a direct result of being inundated by the dam's reservoir, although the exact number remains unclear. Local people would also lose access to fisheries, as well as forest and wildlife resources.

At least 38,675 people, including a large number of indigenous peoples, included in at least 86 villages located along the Sesan and Srepok Rivers and in the reservoir area would lose access to the vast majority of their fisheries resources due to the dam blocking fish migrations from the Mekong and Sekong Rivers up the Sesan and Srepok Rivers. In addition, at least 87 villages in Cambodia located along tributaries of these two rivers would also lose access to migratory fish. In total, at least 78,000 people living above the Sesan 2 dam site are expected to lose access to migratory fish.

Tens of thousands of people living downstream from the proposed dam site along the Sesan, Sekong and Mekong Rivers in Stung Treng Province would be negatively impacted as the result of dramatic changes in hydrology and water quality, causing a whole range of serious impacts ranging from fisheries losses to impacts on domestic water sources. This includes at least 22,277 people living in 19 villages adjacent to the Sesan and Sekong Rivers downstream from the dam site in Stung Treng Province.

Hundreds of thousands of people living as far away as the Tonle Sap Lake in Central Cambodia, the Mekong Delta in Viet Nam, and the middle Mekong River in Laos and Thailand would be negatively impacted by the Sesan 2 dam because of severe impacts to important fish stocks that conduct regional migrations.

Impact of Lower Sesan 2 Dam to Children. The question arises ‘the development is in the national interest; children growth is whose interest?’ Villagers say the project will affect their culture and customs, disturb the burial sites of their ancestors, and destroy the river and forests they rely on daily for their livelihoods.

As many cases, the children are the most sensitive group that will be affected from development projects, and this project is not different. Due to thousands of people have been displaced, it could not deny that a lot of children also forced to resettle together with their families. The dam could also put in risk the food security of millions of people along river and children are potential of this impact.

For example, in Stung Treng province, an area of Cambodia where Don Sahong Dam will have a severe impact, 45% of children are already malnourished. A native from Ratanakiri Province passionately told story about his childhood when he enjoyed spending much of his holiday on the bank of Sesan River, enjoyed fishing and throwing rock into the river. But, it will change if the dam completes.

The problem is particularly difficult considering recent reports that the percentage of children classified as acutely malnourished in Cambodia—the number of which had fallen by half between 2000 and 2005 —increased from 8.4% in 2005 to 8.9% in 2008, representing a considerable setback.

Certainly, if the Sesan 2 dam is built, it can be expected that nutritional statistics in northeastern Cambodia would decline even more, thus making it difficult for the Cambodian government to achieve poverty alleviation targets. As the project missed to mention or provide any special service for children, means the dam developer are violating not just fish, women, local people, but also children. When the families are about forcing to move the children, they have to move with their family, which there was reported that the relocation was inadequate for the land to doing farming, whether they provide medical care or school for children.

According the Convention on the Right of Child (CRC) Article 27 stimulates that the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child’s physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. Similarly, Article 32 states that the state parties recognize the right of the child to be protect from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child’s education, or to be harmful to the child’s health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.

Advocacy Delivery Grid

Type & Description: Some examples are listed under each of these types. You need to choose what is most appropriate or make up new ones. Then give details.	Link to campaign goals, targets, priority level: - How will this help achieve goals? - How relevant & appropriate? - Meant for which targets? - What priority will this have?	What do we have to produce these tools & activities: What resources do we already have – human, info, material, financial, skills.	What else do we need? What else do we need and where can we get it?	How is it going to be done? (Project plans): Who, when, where, how is it going to be done?
IDENTITY (things that make it easy for people to remember you or your campaign)				
Slogans (soft & hard), Logo, Messenger, Positioning				
CAMPAIGN TOOLS (meant to grab attention, provoke response)				
Wristbands, buttons, postcards, T-shirts, Balloons, stickers, graffiti				
INFORMATION TOOLS (contains more information, could even be educational)				
Posters, leaflets, video, website, CD-ROM, USB, reports, press release				
CULTURAL (cultural expression – music, comedy, drama, art, dance is the main delivery)				
Music, performances, dramas, VCD/DVD, street theatre, festivals, prayer ceremonies				
ACTIVITIES (activities to attract the direct participation of public, deepen understanding of target groups, get more allies)				
Protests, direct actions, workshops, conferences, speaking tours, lobbying, door- to-door				

Risk Assessment Grid

Type	Risk/Resistance	Response/Precautionary measures
PERCEPTION/ IDEA/ VERBAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What sorts of misunderstandings, prejudices, ideas, negative statements or verbal traps could be encountered? • How will they be used to attack or obstruct our campaign and/or ourselves? • What are the weaknesses in our message –facts, logic, understandings. <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What can we do or say to pre-empt this threat or obstacle –in our message, tools, choice of messenger and activities? • Is it better to wait until issue is raised? If so, how do we respond? <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
RESOURCES- HUMAN, MATERIAL, NETWORKS, INFORMATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will we have continued access to the resources we need? • What could happen to affect access to resources? • What could affect commitments in terms of networks, alliances, human resources and/or political will? Weakest links? • Is our access to timely information secure? (important if working on current issues) <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do we have alternative sources? • How can we reprioritize resources if needed? (deciding the bottom line) • Is there a 'cut off' point? • Weak links in alliances –define what are the issues, clear definition of roles and commitments, issues of concern, agreements on how to maintain cooperation/ consensus. • Establish back-up systems? <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
PHYSICAL SECURITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the potential backlash from authorities, security forces, armed groups, aggressors? • What are the different levels of danger? E.g., threat, raid, assault, arrest, serious violence. • What are the worst scenarios? <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What level of risk is acceptable? What is the “cut off” point? • What are the escalating possible responses, e.g., enquiry, “peace talks”, intervention from outside, evacuation, etc. • Alert or back-up systems? Escape routes? <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>

Example of the Parent's Permission Letter

Mekong Youth Assembly Project

Addres: 25/6 Ton Kham 2 Road, Tha Sala Sup-district, Muang District, Chiang Mai, 50300

Contact: Tel: +66-844- 369-396, E-mail: mekongyouth@gmail.com, <http://mekongyouth.wordpress.com/>

Date: MM/DD/YY

Mr. xxxxxxxxxx's parent

(The youth's network/organization/school)

Our Ref: MYSP. 07/2015

Subject: Consent letter to participate in the ASEAN Youth Forum 2015 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, April 20-25 2014

Dear xxxxxxxxx's parent,

The Mekong Youth Assembly Project (MYAP) is an environmental network of youth from Mekong countries that aim to strengthen the "Our River Our Life" campaign partners' network in Southeast Asia, and is supported by terre des hommes Germany. MYAP encourages youth-led groups in Mekong countries to join the community and bring positive changes to environmental concerns. terre des hommes Germany's regional biodiversity campaign in Southeast Asian includes the countries of; Myanmar, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. The campaign aims to contribute to the protection and conservation of rivers and biodiversity within Southeast Asia, with the active participation of children and youth.

MYAP is pleased to inform you that your child has been accepted as a participant of the ASEAN Forum 2015 in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia. MYAP will provide transportation, housing and meals during the course in Malaysia from April 20-25, 2015.

We would like to ask you complete the following consent form for your child to participate in the ASEAN Forum 2015, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Sincerely yours,

(Signature)

Position

Example of the Recommended Consent Letter for Children Travelling Abroad

Date: MM/DD/YY

Location: _____

I, _____, declare that I am the lawful Guardian of _____, male/ female, born _____ at _____.

My child, _____, has my consent to travel to Malaysia. Their Passport number is _____, and is valid for the duration of ____/____/____ for travel to _____, for the participation in the _____(event name)_____.

Any question regarding this document may be addressed to me at:

_____.

Home Telephone: _____

Signed on this 17th of April, 2015.

_____(Signature)_____
(Print Name)

_____(Signature)_____
(Witness's Print Name)

_____(Signature)_____
(Witness's Print Name)

Contacts

National Organizations/ Networks on Environment and Child Rights

THAILAND

Contact Information

Community Resource Center (CRC)	1838 /37 Soi Jaraslarp, Sirinthorn Road, Bangplad Bangkok 10700
Development for Children and Community Network (DCCN)	Luang-salween@hotmail.com
EnlawThai Foundation (EnLaw)	www.enlawfoundation.org http://www.facebook.com/enlawthai2001
SEM Sikkha	https://semsikkha.org/tha/
Chiang Kong Mekong School of the Environmental Conservation Organization	http://bit.ly/MekongSchoolCKhong
Monsaengdao Ecological School	www.acedthai.org
Legal Advocacy Center for Indigenous communities (LACIC)	199/1 Moo 3, Mae Sariang subdistrict, Mae Sariang district, Mae Hong Son
Center for Protection and Revival of Local Community Rights (CPCR)	199/332 Soi Mu Ban Suan Nonsi, T.Nong Chom, A.San Sai, Chiang Mai 50210 Tel. +66 53 230 072

VIETNAM

Centre for Social Research and Development (CSRd)	www.csrd.vn
Center for Water Resources Conservation and Development (WARECOD)	www.warecod.org.vn
Green Innovation and Development (Green ID)	http://en.greenidvietnam.org.vn
Center for Biodiversity and Development (CBD)	www.cbd-itb.org.vn
Mekong Delta Youth Network (MDY)	http://mdy.vn/vi/

CAMBODIA

Equitable Cambodia	www.equitablecambodia.org
Highlander Association (HA) Ratanakiri Province	http://bit.ly/HighlandAssoc
3S Rivers Protection Network (3SPN) Ratanakiri Province	www.3spn.org
Youth Resource Development Program (YRDP)	www.yrdp.org
Cambodia Youth Network (CYN)	www.cyncambodia.org
Cambodian Volunteers for Society (CVS)	www.cvs.org.kh

MYANMAR

Mon Pan Youth Association	www.facebook.com/mongpanyouthassociation
Youth Circle	www.facebook.com/Youth-CircleMyanmar
Dawei Development Association	www.facebook.com/DaweiDevelopmentAssociation
Karen Environmental and Social Action Network (KESAN)	www.facebook.com/KarenEnvironment
Kachin Women's Association Thailand (KWAT)	http://kachinwomen.com

LAOS

CLICK	www.clicklaos.org
Participatory Development Training Centre (PADETC)	www.padetc.org
Green Laos Community Volunteer (GLCV)	Namkham village, Sikhotabong district, Vientiane

Regional Organizations/ Networks on Environment and Child Rights

Weaving Bonds Across Border	www.weavingbonds.org
Mekong Community Institute Association (MCI)	www.mekongci.org
NGO Forum on ADB	www.forum-adb.org
Towards Ecological Recovery and Regional Alliance/Foundation for Ecological Recovery (TERRA/FER)	www.terraper.org
Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD)	www.apwld.org
Asia Indigenous People Pact (AIPP)	www.aippnet.org
Focus on the Global South	http://focusweb.org
The ASEAN Secretariat	http://asean.org
The Promotion and the Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC)	http://bit.ly/UNACWC

Mekong regional based Media/ Information Center

Mekong Commons	www.mekongcommons.org
Mekong Eyes	www.mekongeye.com
Open Development Mekong	https://opendevelopmentmekong.net
iMekong	www.imekong.org

International Organizations/ Networks on Environment and Child Rights

terre des hommes (tdh) Germany	www.tdh.de
International Accountability Project (IAP)	http://accountabilityproject.org
International Rivers (IR)	www.internationalrivers.org
Bank Information Center (BIC)	www.bankinformationcenter.org
Business and Human Rights Resource Center	https://business-humanrights.org/en
EarthRights International (ERI)	www.earthrights.org
Oxfam Australia	http://www.oxfam.org.au/
Heinrich Böll Stiftung (HBF)	www.boell-southeastasia.org , http://kh.boell.org , http://mm.boell.org
UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment	http://srenvironment.org

