



UNICEF/Phi/M. Alquinto

Protective Environment: Children in Need of Special Protection

ISSUE

Despite many child protection initiatives, there is still a growing number of children affected by abuse, exploitation and violence in the Philippines. Economic hardship and disintegration of family support structures are major factors contributing to increased commercial sexual exploitation, hazardous and exploitative labour, involvement in armed conflict, children in conflict with the law, and children deprived of parental care.

While there are a number of laws in place, enforcement remains weak, and judicial rules and procedures for dealing with children's issues still need to be made more child-sensitive and childfriendly. Perhaps most importantly, there is still a need to create a collective consciousness of a protective environment for children that will challenge values, attitudes and practices that allow abuse and exploitation to thrive.

ACTION

Protecting Children from Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation: UNICEF will work with Barangay Councils for the Protection of Children (BCPC) to introduce master-listing of all children at risk in targeted areas. Education initiatives including vocational skills training will form the core of the rehabilitation and

reintegration process. Parents in vulnerable zones will be provided with caregiver effectiveness training to assist in supporting quality family experiences. Children will be empowered with Life Skills and will be assisted to participate in their own protection. Alternative family care arrangements will be piloted.

Protecting Children in Armed Conflict: The programme will focus on expanding the “children as zones of peace” approach, disarmament, demobilization and rehabilitation and advocacy to continue the uninterrupted critical services for children such as education and health. UNICEF will advocate for adherence to the Convention on the Rights of the Child in peace negotiations and for children to participate as peace advocates through various channels. Training will be provided for social workers and service providers on bio-psycho-social help and case management for children affected by conflict.

Legal Protection and Justice for Children: Strenuous advocacy for enactment of the Comprehensive Juvenile Justice Bill is on-going and is an essential part of this project. Work on several levels is directed at building the capacity of the five pillars of justice – judges, prosecutors, public attorneys, corrections officers and social workers – to handle the special needs of children with sensitivity and special care. UNICEF will place special emphasis on strengthening the barangay justice system to enhance community-based diversion and alternatives to detention.

Partnerships and Alliances for Child Protection: UNICEF has been in the forefront of setting up a set up a multi-level child protection system from the BCPC up to the national Council for the Welfare of Children with a strong referral network and system for all cases of abuse exploitation and violence. This project will further strengthen and guide various child protection networks and resources of the private sector, NGOs, civil society and faith organizations. A national database and monitoring/ reporting system will be operationalized. Emphasis will be placed shifting from ad-hoc responses to more integrated programming for prevention, rescue, rehabilitation, reintegration and legal protection.

IMPACT

This programme intends to reach about 50 per cent of the 42,000 barangays in the Philippines with tools to strengthen the activities of BCPCs. With passage of the Comprehensive Juvenile Justice Bill, some 5 to 10 per cent of court cases will be removed from the justice system. A cadre of trained social workers and social workers and care providers will be developed in all CPC areas and beyond. All 82 family courts will be equipped with video conferencing facilities, and child-friendly investigation studios will be set up in all 16 regional centers.

ESTIMATED BUDGET (US\$)

Item/Description	2004	2005	2006	Total
1. Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation	405,000	507,000	608,500	1,521,180
2. Children in Armed Conflict	340,000	422,500	510,000	1,272,500
3. legal protection and Justice for Children	350,000	422,500	490,000	1,262,500
4. Partnerships and Alliances	250,500	338,000	425,000	1,013,500
TOTAL	1,345,500	1,690,000	2,033,500	5,069,680