



## Four Gifts for Children: Child-Friendly Policies, Institutions and Accountability

### ISSUE

Under the Philippines' decentralization law, most basic social services are the responsibility of local government units (i.e., 79 provinces, 115 cities, 1,496 municipalities and 41,000 *barangays*). Even so, devolved authority and resources available to LGUs do not adequately cover social sector responsibilities. LGUs have varying capacities to manage these services. In many cases, there is still a limited notion of accountability for critical issues facing children and women. UNICEF's experience in promoting a child-friendly approach to local governance has shown that children's and women's issues can be brought to the local political agenda and kept there, through development of four essential tools: the Local Development Plan for Children, the Local Investment Plan for Children, the Local Legal Code for Children and the Local Annual State of the Children Report. In addition, emergency preparedness and response is best handled at the local level. Despite the Philippines' proneness to natural and man-made disaster, there is still much scope for improved prevention and mitigation planning, coordination of relief operations and long-term intervention.

## ACTION

**Local Law and Policy Advocacy:** National laws, especially those safeguarding the rights of children such as those on the Early Childhood Care and Development, Anti-Trafficking of Persons and HIV/AIDS, are too often poorly implemented, underfunded or not understood at local government level. LGUs need assistance in translating these national laws into local programmes. UNICEF will work with 72 LGUs to establish more inclusive processes of formulating Local Development Plans and enacting Local Legal Codes for children. These foundation documents are the first critical step in ensuring broad based political support, implementation and accountability for children's and women's issues.

**Building Child Friendly Local Institutions:** Some local institutions (local development councils, local councils for the protection of children, local school and health boards, local disaster coordinating councils and local peace and order councils) have important duties and functions in decentralized governance. UNICEF will work closely with the Department of Interior and Local Government to sensitize them to strengthen child rights programmes through information, education and communication materials. We will also build capacity to improve policy coordination, service delivery, regulation and enforcement. One of the critical areas of work will be in disaster and emergency preparedness of local governments and institutions.

**Promoting Local Child Rights Accountability:** UNICEF will work closely with the Regional Councils for the Welfare of Children to provide incentives for local governments to adopt child-friendly approaches in governance. UNICEF will assist LGUs to develop and improve the process of delivering the provincial/city State of the Children Reports with special emphasis on reporting best practices and the status of the Millennium Development Goals and other priority local goals. Award competitions such as the "Child-Friendly City/Municipality" and the "Galing Pook" (Excellent Community) award for local governments will be strengthened so that the criteria, assessment and presentation are improved for maximum social mobilization benefit.

## IMPACT

In three years, 48 more LGUs will implement and manage the Four Gifts for Children approach. National laws on ECCD, HIV/AIDS, Anti-Trafficking of Persons and others will be elaborated and adapted into local legal codes. Local institutions, processes, practices, laws and accountability in respect of children will be strengthened and supported. Local emergency preparedness plans will be improved and updated on a regular basis in collaboration with the 16 Regional Disaster Coordinating Councils.

## ESTIMATED BUDGET (US\$)

Item/Description	2004	2005	2006	Total
1. Local Law and Policy Advocacy	80,000	80,000	80,000	240,000
2. Building Child Friendly Institutions	70,000	70,000	70,000	210,000
3. Local Child Rights Accountability	40,000	40,000	40,000	120,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>192,000</b>	<b>192,000</b>	<b>192,000</b>	<b>570,000</b>