



Lao People's Democratic Republic
Peace Independence Democracy Unity Prosperity

National Plan of Action for Child Protection System Strengthening (2022 – 2026)

Published by:

Social Welfare Department, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare

Vientiane Capital, October 2022



Lao People's Democratic Republic
Peace Independence Democracy Unity Prosperity

Prime Minister

No 292/PM
Vientiane Capital, date 25.08.2022

Decree

For the endorsement and promulgation
Of the National Plan of Action for Child Protection System Strengthening 2022-2026

- Pursuant to the amended Law of the Lao Government, no. 03/NA, dated 16 Nov 2021;
- Pursuant to the Agreement made in the Ordinary Session of the Government Meeting in May 2022, no. 06/Gol, dated 03 June 2022;
- Pursuant to the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare letter, no. 2729/MLSW, dated 11 July 2022.

Prime Minister has issued the following Decree to

- Article 1: Endorse and promulgation of the National Plan of Action for Child Protection System Strengthening 2022-2026.
- Article 2: Appoint the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare to coordinate directly with the concerned sectors to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of the implementation of the National Plan of Action for Child Protection System Strengthening 2022-2026.
- Article 3: Line ministries, equivalent organizations, local government agencies and all concerned sectors to acknowledge, cooperate and implement this decree strictly and effectively.
- Article 4: This Decree shall be effective from the date of signature.

Prime Minister of Lao PDR

Phankham Viphavanh

Foreword

The National Plan of Action (NPA) for Child Protection System Strengthening (CPSS) is developed based on the findings from the Assessment of the Child Protection System in the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), through a participatory consultation process and on the application of the technical principles of UNICEF and Child Frontiers. The Assessment of the Child Protection System in Lao PDR was conducted under the supervision of the Committee for Protection and Assistance of Children (CPAC) at the central level. It was supported by the Technical Working Group (TWG), which was responsible for conducting assessments. The TWG consisted of members from the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, government ministries, the judiciary, mass organisations and education institutions. UNICEF provided financial and technical support for the assessment by conducting research from relevant sources and conducting joint consultations at central and local levels. The assessment report was endorsed by the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare in 2021.

The National Plan of Action (NPA) for Child Protection System Strengthening (CPSS) is contributing to the third goal, output 5 of the 9th Five-Year National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2021-2025) and the 5th Five-Year Labour and Social Welfare Development Plan (2021-2025). This document will be a reference for the relevant actors-government agencies, national and international organizations, to mobilize resources towards helping children who need special protection and leave no one behind.

The process of developing the National Plan of Action (NPA) for Child Protection System Strengthening (CPSS), involved several consultation meetings at the central and local levels with relevant government agencies, UNICEF, international organizations and a wide range of non-government organizations including children. Through the consultations, participants reached a consensus that this National Plan of Action has the appropriate structure, aligns with the Lao National Plan of Action and the national socio-economic development policies and plans and is also well-aligned with the regional and international strategies. This National Plan of Action consists of the objectives, responsibilities, programmes, priority actions and activities.

This National Plan of Action demonstrates the commitment and responsibility of the Government of Lao PDR in implementing its obligations towards child protection at the regional and international level, especially its cooperation with international organizations and development partners to increase effective collaborations in the protection and assistance of the children of Lao PDR.

Minister of Labour and Social Welfare



Baykham Khattiya

Table of Contents

- I. Introduction.....1**
 - 1. The Role and Importance of the National Plan of Action for Child Protection System Strengthening.....1**
 - 2. Scope of the National Plan of Action.....1**
 - 3. Development Process.....2**
- II. Child Protection Context at the International, Regional and Lao PDR levels.....3**
 - 1. International and Regional Contexts.....3**
 - 2. Child Protection Context in Lao PDR4**
 - 2.1. Overview of Children Protection Issues.....4
 - 2.2. Legislations.....5
 - 2.3. Achievements in the Implementation of Child Protection Works in Lao PDR.....8
 - 2.4. Challenges.....11
- III. National Plan of Action for Child Protection System Strengthening (2022-2026).....13**
 - 1. Overall Objective.....13**
 - 2. General Directions and Duties.....13**
 - 3. Programmes.....13**
 - 4. Priority Actions14**
 - 4.1. Programme Area 1: Strengthen Legal Framework, Tools and Evidence14
 - 4.1.1. Priority Action 1: Improve Legal and Regulatory Framework and Guidelines.....14
 - 4.1.2. Priority Action 2: Integrate and Mainstream the Child Protection Work into Relevant Sectoral Programmes.....14
 - 4.1.3. Priority Action 3: Improve Coordination Mechanism for Child Protection System Strengthening.....14
 - 4.1.4. Priority Action 4: Increase Capacity to Monitor and Raise Financial Resources for Child Protection.....15
 - 4.1.5. Strengthen International and Regional Collaboration on Child protection, Child rights and Child well-being15
 - 4.2. Programme Area 2: Strengthen the Social Service Workforce on Child Protection.....16
 - 4.2.1. Priority Action 1: Professionalize Social Service Workforce.....16
 - 4.2.2. Priority Action 2: Build Capacity of Child Protection and Allied Sectors at the Central and Local Levels.....16
 - 4.2.3. Priority Action 3: Build Capacity of and Operationalize the Child Protection Network (CPN) to Identify, Report and Respond to Child Protection Cases at the Village Level.....17

4.3. Programme Area 3: Emergency-response Child Protection Service.....	17
4.3.1. Priority Action 1: Implement Preventive Services, including Awareness-raising, Social and Gender Norms Changes and Creating Opportunities for Children, Youth and Families.....	17
4.3.2. Priority Action 2: Implement Quality, Integrated Gender and Emergency-responsive Child Protection Services.....	18
4.4. Programme Area 4: Enhanced Monitoring, Data Collection and Evidence Generation...	19
4.4.1. Priority Action 1: Strengthen Monitoring, Review and Data Management.....	19
4.4.2. Priority Action 2: Conduct Data Collection, Research and Evidence Generation....	19
4.4.3. Priority Action 3: Promote Learning and Knowledge Exchange.....	29

IV. Implementation Mechanism for the National Plan of Action for Child Protection System Strengthening (2022-2026).....20

1. Funding Source	20
2. Implementation Mechanism.....	20
2.1 Committee for Protection and Assistance of Children at the Central level	20
2.2. Sectors and Organizations at the Central and Local Levels.....	20
3. Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting.....	23

Annex A. Logframe of the National Plan of Action for Child Protection System Strengthening (2022-2026).....24

Annex B. Abbreviation and Acronyms38

Annex C. Definition and Key Concepts40

I. Introduction

1. The Role and Importance of the National Plan of Action for Child Protection System Strengthening

Child Protection is the prevention of and response to violence, exploitation, abuse, neglect, abandonment, and harmful practices against children. It is embedded in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and featured prominently in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Government of Lao PDR has given priority to implementing the CRC and integrated it into the national laws and relevant legislations in accordance with the resource capacity and socio-economic development conditions to protect the rights and interests of all children. In addition, the Government of Lao PDR has also endorsed the Global Pledge and launched the 'Lao Generation 2030' initiative which promotes increased investments in children and young people.

The Constitution of the Lao PDR stipulates the protection of children. It sets out that “the state and society are committed to the development of quality national education, creating opportunities and conditions for universal education, especially for people in remote, ethnic, women, children, disadvantaged people and persons with disabilities. The state, society and the family are committed to implementing policies to develop and promote the advancement of women and protect the rights and interests of women and children.”

The Ninth Five-Year National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSED), 2021-2025 outlines priority actions to promote women and children's access to development, gender equality and the full protection of their rights and interests, develop women and children to be fully equipped to contribute to socio-economic development and protecting the rights and interests of women, children and ethnic groups by providing the necessary assistance or subsidies to improve their lives and promote broader social participation.

The different National Plans of Action (NPA) related to children have objectives that address general and specific issues of child protection. These NPAs are interconnected with child protection. Since child protection involves many sectors, these different NPAs must support each other and work in cohesion. NPA for CPSS is the first NPA developed by Lao PDR with the aim of strengthening the child protection system and the development of the social service workforce. The development of this NPA demonstrates the government's commitment to establishing and strengthening child protection systems as a significant measure to protect children from all forms of violence, neglect, abuse and exploitation, developing human resources towards improving the well-being of children and addressing situations of violence among children.

2. Scope of the National Plan of Action for Child Protection System Strengthening

The NPA for CPSS aims to ensure that all children, including children in need of special protection, disadvantaged children and at-risk children, are protected in accordance with their rights and interests. It also aims to ensure that all children are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy; have a good attitude, knowledge and abilities; have a good life in society and become good successors of the nation.

To achieve this overall goal, the NPA for CPSS will focus on strengthening legislative frameworks, monitoring, data collection and evidence generation on child protection; developing information tools and systems; and strengthening formulation, planning, coordination and monitoring of child protection structures; supporting professional development and functioning of social service workforce in Lao PDR and improving preventive and responsive child protection services.

3. Development Process

The National Plan of Action (NPA) for Child Protection System Strengthening (CPSS) was developed under the leadership of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MOLSW) with support from UNICEF and in cooperation with other line ministries, including the Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA), Ministry of Justice (MOJ), Ministry of Public Security (MOPS), Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES), Ministry of Health (MOH), Supreme People's Prosecutor, People's Supreme Court, Lao Women's Union (LWU), Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union (LYU) and the Office of the Secretariat for the National Commission for the Advancement of Women, Mothers, and Children (NCAWMC). Additionally, international non-government organisations in Lao PDR i.e. Save the Children International, Plan International, World Vision International, ChildFund Laos, Friends International, Village Focus International and SOS Children's Village Lao PDR also participated in the process, which took place between 2018 to 2022. The NPA is developed based on the evidence generated from the Assessment of the Child Protection System in Lao PDR, lessons learned and experience from previous child protection interventions, strategies, NPAs and the Core Recommendations for Child Protection System Strengthening in Lao PDR.

The NPA process were widely discussed widely discussed with the participation of children, adolescents and village authorities. It was followed by a consultation with the Committee for Protection and Assistance of Children (CPAC) at the central and local levels and another consultation with the representatives from relevant agencies from the southern, central and northern provinces of Lao PDR.

This National Plan of Action consists of four parts: Part I: The Introduction, Part II: Child Protection Context at the International, Regional and Lao PDR levels, Part III: The National Plan of Action for Child Protection System Strengthening and Part IV: Implementation Mechanism for the National Plan of Action for Child Protection System Strengthening.

II. Child Protection Context at the International, Regional and Lao PDR levels

1. International and Regional Contexts

The protection of children is enshrined in the CRC and the SDGs. The SDGs have key targets aimed at ending different forms of violence against children (4, 5, 8, 16), as well as targets to address the drivers and vulnerabilities of children to violence (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 13, 16). However, despite the progress made, child protection-related SDGs are off-track across the world. For example:

- SDG 5 (Gender Equality): 1 in 3 adolescent girls aged 15 to 19 worldwide have been victims of emotional, physical, or sexual violence committed by their husbands or partners at some point in their lives. 15 million adolescent girls aged 15 to 19 have experienced forced sex (Indicator 5.2). An estimated 650 million girls and women today were married before their 18th birthday (Indicator 5.3);
- SDG 8 (Child Labour): 152 million children are engaged in child labour globally, and almost 73 million children are in hazardous work sectors (Indicator 8.7).
- SDG 16 (Violence against Children; Access to Justice; Legal Identity): the United Nations verified over 25,000 grave violations against children affected by armed conflict in 2019—more than half committed by non-State actors, and a third by government and international forces (Indicator 16.1); about half the world’s children below the age of 15 are subjected to physical discipline at home, and roughly 3 in 4 children between the ages of 2 and 4 years are exposed to psychological aggression and corporal punishment regularly (Indicator 16.2); in one-third of countries, at least 5 per cent of young women reported experiences of sexual violence during childhood (Indicator 16.2); one in four children under age 5 (166 million), on average, are not registered in the world today and 237 million children under 5 do not have a birth certificate (Indicator 16.9). This shows that the world is not on track to achieve universal birth registration by 2030.

In 1989, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly and widely acclaimed as a landmark achievement for human rights, calling for the State Parties to ensure the promotion and protection of the rights of every child in the world while recognizing children as social, economic, political, civil and cultural actors. The CRC also recognizes the importance of incorporating children’s views and opinions in the development and evaluation of strategies and programmes designed to recognize their rights and meet their specific needs and development.

East Asia and the Pacific were one of the first regions in the world to be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Hundreds of millions of people in the region were affected by it. In the initial COVID-19 preparedness and response, medical supplies, including personal protective equipment, has run short across the East Asia and Pacific region. Countries with less robust health systems and limited

capacities were at particular risk to manage such a major disease outbreak. The closure of schools in the region (in order to contain the spread of the virus), affected the learning of millions of students. Apart from learning, it also highlighted child protection concerns as alternative care arrangements were not in place. The impact of the closure of livelihoods and the economic slowdown was felt acutely by those families that were already on unstable and low wages. In 2020, the ASEAN ministers for social welfare and development, including from Lao PDR, released a joint statement on mitigating the impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable groups.

While COVID-19 set back the advancement of children's rights, it also provided opportunities for child protection. There were opportunities to leverage digital technology and creative communication methods to engage with parents and families on care giving for children, physical and mental health and well-being of children during the pandemic and critical covid prevention and management-related information. COVID-19 pandemic also created an increased recognition of the role of social workers as an essential workforce to provide the initial services to prevent the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the regional level, during the 35th ASEAN Summit in 2019, two key declarations related to Child Protection were adopted: (1) Declaration on the Rights of Children in the Context of Migration and (2) Declaration on the Protection of Children from All Forms of Online Exploitation and Abuse. During this summit, other documents that were adopted are (3) A Joint Statement on Reaffirmation of Commitment to Advancing the Rights of the Child and (4) A Report on the UN Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty. In 2020, the 37th ASEAN Summit adopted the Ha Noi Declaration on Strengthening Social Work Towards Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN Community and the ASEAN is developing a Regional Plan of Action to implement the Ha Noi Declaration.

2. Child Protection Context in Lao PDR

2.1 Overview of Child Protection Issues

Most children and adolescents in Lao PDR are fortunate to grow up in caring families and communities, surrounded by immediate relatives, extended families and community members who help to support and ensure their well-being. However, research shows that children in Lao PDR also face a range of serious vulnerabilities, including physical, emotional and sexual violence. There are also children who are exploited, abused, neglected and abandoned, including disadvantaged children.

The National Survey on Violence against Children (2016) found that 15 percent of women and 16.9 percent of men had experienced at least one form of physical violence before they were 18 years old. According to the survey, most perpetrators of mental violence against children are their own parents and stepparents. Girls who participated in the survey and reported having been sexually assaulted did not receive any assistance or services. The findings of the survey informed further interventions in strengthening the child protection system and the development of the vision for child protection.

The Lao Social Indicator Survey II (LSIS II 2017) reported a decrease in violence against children. The proportion of children between the ages of 2 and 14 who had been physically punished by violent punishment dropped from 77.1 percent to 70 percent in the last five years. However,

the survey also found that 7 out of 10 children between the ages of 2 and 14 were still subjected to some form of physical punishment by adults in their households.

The LSIS II also reflected some key indicators related to the well-being of children. These included birth registration, violence against children and child marriage. Birth registration for children under the age of 5 was at 73 per cent (compare to 75 per cent from the LSIS I) and only 10 per cent of mothers or caregivers knew the process of registration of birth for their child. Birth registration rates for children were higher in the categories of mothers with higher education, children from Lao-Thai-headed households and children from urban households. Regarding child labour, the survey found that 27.9 per cent of children between the ages of 5 and 17 worked in hazardous conditions and 42.8 per cent were involved in child labour (in the previous week).

Child marriage remains a challenge in Lao PDR and East Asia and the Pacific region, with 16.3 per cent of girls entering a marital union before they reach the age of 18. According to LSIS II, education was an important factor in early marriage. 46.4 per cent of uneducated women between the ages of 20 and 49 were married before the age of 18, compared to just 1.5 per cent of women in the same age group who had received higher education. In terms of ethnic differences, the highest proportion of women (between the ages of 20 and 49 married before the age of 18) were from the Hmong-Mian ethnic group (54.9 per cent). Adolescent pregnancy was also alarmingly high, with 83 out of every 1,000 girls between the ages of 15 and 19 giving birth. Its prevalence was higher among the rural, poor and least educated population groups.

2.2 Legislations

In order to protect the rights and interests of children, the Government has made efforts to develop laws, sub-law legislations and measures related to child protection as a basis for implementation. These include:

- **Law on Protection of the Interests and Rights of Children** (No. 5/NA, dated 27 December 2006): Article 38 stipulates that the State has the responsibility to prevent and combat child abuse and exploitation by issuing measures to protect and assist children who are at risk of abuse or exploitation.
- **Law on Preventing and Combatting Violence Against Women and Children** (No. 56/NA, dated 23 December 2014): stipulates the measures for preventing and combatting violence against women and children through prevention, protection and provision of assistance to victims of violence. The Law aims at eliminating all forms of violence against women and children, upholding the rights and dignity of women and children and gender equality.
- **Law on Anti-Trafficking in Persons** (No. 73/NA, dated 17 December 2015): aims to protect the rights, best interests, lives, health, dignity, and freedom of citizens (including children), contributing to maintaining valuable national traditions and customs and maintain social peace and social order.
- **Law on Juvenile Criminal Procedure** (No. 41/NA, dated 20 December 2013): defines the principles, rules and measures for monitoring and inspection of the administration, resolution and judicial proceedings of juvenile cases. The law aims to protect the rights

and interests of children; assist and educate children to respect and implement the laws; eliminate and prevent juvenile crimes; build social peace and order, and create conditions for children to adjust and reintegrate into society thereby contributing to the protection and development of the nation.

- **Penal Code** (No 26/NA dated 17 May 2017): The objective of the Penal Code is to safeguard the political, economic, and social system of the Lao People's Democratic Republic; the interests of the State; the legitimate rights, interests, health, life, honour, dignity and freedom of citizens; national security and public order; to deter criminal conducts; and to educate all citizens to respect the laws. The rights of the child are also protected under the Penal Code. Article 268, Para 3, and Article 269 of the Penal Code specify that coercion of children aged under 18 into marriage or marriage with a person under the age of 18 is a criminal offence.
- **Law on Persons with Disabilities** (No. 57/NA, dated 10 December 2018): defines the principles, rules, and measures for the administration and monitoring of activities to support people with disabilities, including children. The law aims to protect the rights and interests of people and children with disabilities; eliminate all forms of discrimination; create the conditions for people and children with disabilities to develop and become self-reliant; be able to participate in social activities, and attain political, legal, economic, cultural, social and family equality.
- **Labour Law** (No. 43/NA, dated 24 December 2013): sets the minimum age of employment at 14 years and also introduces a new provision prohibiting hazardous work for all persons under 18 in compliance with ILO 182. This includes employment duties, locations that are unsafe, dangerous to the health, safety, or morals of the child, forced labour, work to repay debts, human trafficking, trade or deception into the sex industry or solicitation of prostitution, photography or pornography, trade or deception in the movement and production, transportation, possession of narcotics or addictive substances.
- **Criminal Procedure Law** (Amended version No. 37/NA of 14 November 2017): The objective of this law is to define the principles, regulations and measures relating to the judicial correctness of criminal procedures, limit and eradicate misconduct, protect the interests of the State and organizations and the legitimate rights and interests of the public.
- **Education Law** (No.62/NA dated 16 July 2015): Article 28 of this law affirms that primary education and lower secondary education are compulsory and that citizens are obliged to attend and complete; Article 45 also affirms that based on the regulation, students, in particular those from poor families, disadvantaged groups, the disabled, gifted or outstanding students, females and students from ethnic groups shall receive support; Article 70 prohibits students to create gangs to disturb and cause disorder in educational institutions and society; Article 71 prohibits teachers to beat, scold, be cruel, and being biased against students; Article 74 prohibits families to show behaviours prompting their children to behave in improper ways.

- **Decree on Legal Aid** (No.77/Govt, dated February 28, 2018): The purpose of this Decree is to define the principles, regulations, and measures related to the management and monitoring of legal aid services. Its objective is to ensure that every citizen, including children, has access to legal aid and legal proceedings. This decree aims at protecting the legitimate rights and interests of adults and children and their equality before the law.
- **Decree on the Adoption and Implementation of the National Social Protection Strategy** (No.224/PM, dated 01 April 2020): insists that the Government ensures that citizens of Lao PDR have access to basic social protection services, including health insurance, social security and social welfare in an equitable, adequate, effective and sustainable manner. It emphasizes that social welfare's coverage and services should meet the needs of target groups, including child victims of violence, exploitation, sexual abuse, human trafficking, and children rescued from hazardous working conditions or labour exploitation.
- **National Strategy on Civil Administration and Vital Statistics 2016-2025.**
- **National Plan of Action for Preventing and Combatting Trafficking in Persons** (Phase I (2013-2015) No. 37/PM, dated 03 February 2014) and Phase 2 (2017-2020)No. 49/PM, dated January 23, 2018, and phase III (2021-2025) No. 027/CATIP, dated 23 August, 2021.
- **National Plan of Action for Prevention and Elimination of Child Labour 2014-2020:** aims to enhance policies in education, training, health, social protection, and employment to improve access of child labourers and vulnerable children to services and interventions, improve the quality and quantity of educational services to keep children in school; mainstream child labour concerns into agriculture sector policies and interventions.
- **Agreement on Teacher and Student Management** (No.2059/MOES, dated 11 June 2013): Article 3 defines the duties of teachers. These include coordinating with parents and guardians to encourage and educate students, preserve peace and order, assess, praise, and provide feedback to students according to the rules. Article 8 sets forth the rights of students to be properly cared for and protected by teachers, organizations within the school, parents, guardians, and society. Article 10 prohibits students to use violence that impacts the physical and mental well-being of students and people in society.
- **Agreement on Light Work for Young Workers aged between 14 and not lower than 12 years,** No. 4183/MoLSW, dated 23 November 2016: Article 3 lists the types of work allowed for young workers and Article 4 defines the conditions for light work for young workers.
- **Minister's Agreement on the Establishment of a Child Protection Network** (No. 0855/MOLSW, dated 24 March 2017): to establish mechanisms for the protection and assistance of children at the community level, to identify, collect data and statistics on children at risk or children who are victims of abuse, neglect, exploitation, discrimination, violence and child offenders, as well as the referral mechanisms to refer children to appropriate assistance.

- **Agreement on the Determination of Dangerous Work**, No.4182/ NS, dated 23 November 2016, that prohibits the use of young workers.
- **National Guideline on Prevention and Response to Violence against Children in Secondary Schools in Lao PDR**. No 295/NCAWMC, dated 04 November, 2020.

2.3 Achievements in the Implementation of Child Protection in Lao PDR

Tremendous efforts were made to develop and strengthen the child protection system in Lao PDR. The child protection system includes the establishment of child protection structures, mechanisms for implementation, coordination, follow up and monitoring of child protection interventions at the national and local levels to ensure that children are protected and receive assistance according to their rights and best interests.

Key national-level structures include the Child Protection and Assistance Committee (CPAC), the Juvenile Justice Coordination Committee (JJCC), and the National Anti-Human Trafficking Committee (NAHTC). In an emergency, the Government activates the Protection Cluster which comprises government agencies, the United Nations, non-governmental organizations (INGOs), and civil society organizations (CSOs) to collaborate and devise solutions in a timely manner.

In terms of the coordination mechanism, annual review meetings by different committees are used as a platform to review the progress in the previous year and set the direction and plan for the next year. The meetings are held with the participation of relevant departments from the government, international organizations, international non-governmental organizations and CSOs. In addition, sub-meetings are organized every 3 months and 6 months to report on progress and to discuss and resolve child protection and assistance challenges.

To better assist children at the community level, Article 35 of the Law on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Children stipulates that at the village level Child Protection Networks (CPNs) are established under the guidance of the CPAC to monitor and assist children. CPNs are also responsible for receiving reports, identifying vulnerable children and families, providing protection and assistance, and collecting statistics on children at risk and children in need of special protection. To date, CPNs have been established in 2,814 villages, and 337 villages have received training on child protection and their roles and responsibilities. To foster the professional social worker cadre in Lao PDR, the MOLSW and the Department of Social Work and Development (DSWD) of the National University of Laos (NUOL), with the support of UNICEF, provided ‘para-professional’ social work training to 106 social workers (F32/ M74) in 6 provinces. Since 2020, NUOL, UNICEF and MOLSW have been conducting an evaluation of the undergraduate social work curriculum. This included a review of all topics under the curriculum and practical work and internships.

In terms of providing support to the most vulnerable children, MOLSW offered care and support to 1,302 children deprived of parental care (F614/ M688) in 6 SOS Children’s Villages in 6 provinces (Vientiane Capital, Champasak, Savannakhet, Xiengkhouang, Luang Prabang and Houaphanh). MOLSW assisted 106 children with disabilities in 18 villages in Xiengkhouang and Savannakhet provinces by providing training to parents and caregivers on the care and rehabilitation of

children with disabilities. A training manual on care and support for children with disabilities was developed and used to train 93 government officials and village coordinators.

Among the assistance provided to street children and homeless children, underprivileged and disadvantaged children in Vientiane Capital and Luang Prabang province was the establishment of a temporary shelter at Friends International. Services provided at the shelter were reintegration of children in foster families, vocational training, financial support for small businesses and employment opportunity. Friends International supported 2,578 children (F1,308 / M1,270) to continue their education in the general education system. They also conducted awareness-raising on the care and protection of children living in the streets and out-of-school children. 4,423 people (F2,226 / M2,197) participated in it.

To support victims of trafficking, the vulnerable survivors of domestic violence, and rape, the Lao Women's Union (LWU) provided treatment and rehabilitation services to 404 victims (F344 / M60). The rehabilitation services included legal aid, medical and therapeutic assistance, education and vocational training, rehabilitation, and community reintegration were included.

There are currently two government-funded temporary shelters for the victims of abuse and violence: the Counselling and Protection Centre for Women and Children in Vientiane capital and the Reception Centre in Luang Namtha province. There are three additional centres run by international organizations, namely the Centres for Assistance of Disadvantaged Children and Women managed by Village Focus International (VFI) in Champassak province and Vientiane Capital and the Centre for Assistance of Disadvantaged Children and Women run by Saengsavang in Savannakhet Province. There are 5 types of services provided to victims, these include temporary shelter (with the provision of food, clothing, necessary materials/supplies and mental rehabilitation), legal aid, medical assistance and treatment, education and vocational training and reintegration of victims into the family and society.

The human trafficking reporting helpline (number 1300) and LWU counselling help line (number 1362) services were started. These hotlines provide free-of-charge counselling for women and children and for victims living in the centres. In-person counselling services were conducted at the counselling centres. From 2014 to 2020, 5,725 people sought counselling services, of which 4,170 cases were provided by telephone counselling and 1,555 cases were provided face-to-face counselling services.

On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in 2019 UNICEF, the Government of Lao PDR, representatives from all 18 provinces, development partners, CSOs, the private sector and children themselves gathered together to announce their commitment to promote and enhance the potential of the 'Lao Generation 2030' (LG2030). The LG 2030 vision was translated into the National Plan of Action on Mothers and Children 2021-2025.

Each year, the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism (MICT) disseminates information on the policies, laws and legislation related to the protection of the rights and interests of the child. This also includes the Prime Minister's message on the occasion of International Children's Day through including radio, television, newspapers and online media. In 2020 and 2021, the MICT

developed the Media and Children's Rights Guidelines and disseminated 10,000 copies to media professionals across the country to inform them of their responsibilities in ethical child rights reporting.

The birth registration system is fundamental to establishing children's right to an identity. It supports the authorities in tracking and assisting missing children, victims of human trafficking, and victims of violence and exploitation. The government acknowledges a decrease in the birth registration rate of girls and boys under the age of five from 75% in 2011/2012 to 73% in 2017. It is noted that low registration rates prevail among populations from low socio-economic status, in accessible and remote parts of the country and low maternal education status. Overall, only 60% of newborns are registered in the first year of life.

Measures have been taken to implement and promote a child-friendly justice system at the local level. With UNICEF's support, information, education and communication (IEC) materials on legal and social assistance for children in contact with the law were developed in 2017 and disseminated to people in rural and hard-to-reach areas. Since 2017, 47 Legal Advice and Counselling Offices have been established to provide legal and social assistance for children and adults. In addition, awareness-raising activities on child-friendly legal proceedings were conducted 14 times for a total of 840 (F209 / M631) officials from the justice sector and children, students and the public in eight provinces.

Training modules on child rights and child justice for law enforcement officers were developed by the Juvenile Justice Coordination Committee and UNICEF with support from UNICEF Australia and the Government of Australia. The training modules have been integrated into the curriculum of 1) the People's Police Academy; 2) the People's Peace Academy; 3) Research and Training Institute Prosecutors; 4) Research, Training Institute for Judges; and 5) the National Judicial Training Institute. Training sessions on child rights and child justice were conducted for 359 members (F89/ M270) of the Child Prosecutor's Units. In addition, training sessions on the implementation of the Law on Juvenile Criminal Procedure and 'child-friendly' communication skills were provided to the police officers appointed as focal persons for juvenile justice in all provinces. Training sessions on adoption laws and procedures were conducted for the members of the Adoption Committees in 54 districts of 12 provinces and the 'mobile units' in charge of community assistance in Savannakhet, Xiengkhouang and Vientiane Capital.

Training on Psychological First Aid (PFA) and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) was conducted for 77 staff from the social welfare sector to assist people affected by disasters.

To ensure the safety and protection of children in emergencies, the MOLSW, in cooperation with the relevant sectors, carried out a series of activities to support children and families during the flood in Sanamxay District, Attapeu Province in 2018. It included the provision of temporary shelters for affected children; providing care and support to 58 children who lost their parents; creating a safe environment for children to play, learn and interact with other children under the project 'Child-Friendly Space (CFS)'. Over 3,000 children participated in the activities conducted in CFS; training sessions were conducted for 112 facilitators and local authorities on how to organize child-friendly activities and provide psychosocial support to children who face problems. These training sessions also raised awareness among 300 children and

adolescents on how to identify risks and protect themselves from the risks and dangers of natural disasters such as school dropout, child marriage, child pregnancy, violence and online exploitation.

Hygiene kits and learning materials were provided to nearly 10,000 children living in seven provinces in SOS Villages, orphanages, and CSO partners' shelters. In addition, 616 cases of domestic violence, sexual violence, and trafficking received counselling through the LWU counselling helpline, and 3,142 people received counselling from the LYU helpline in 2021, Thus representing a 93% increase compared to 2020.

Seven TV and radio spots in Lao, ethnic languages and sign languages were used to provide information on the prevention of COVID-19, messages on non-discrimination and stigma due to COVID-19 and assistance to reduce mental health problems and anxiety. 'USB' audio messages were also recorded and distributed to 4,800 villages for community broadcasting through public speakers, reaching 3.4 million audiences.

2.4 Challenges

Despite the achievements and progress made in child protection and assistance, many challenges remain in the following areas:

- Implementing and integrating the recommendations related to children's right to life, survival and development, birth registration, children without parental care, children with disabilities and health care for children, into the national strategies and policies. Comprehensive child protection systems, coordination, data collection, capacity building, and resource allocation are still limited.
- The coordination mechanism and the division of responsibilities among the government agencies, as well as CPAC, appears to be irregular and fragmented. In addition, the provision of services and monitoring has not yet achieved its objectives and goal.
- Lack of a comprehensive Child Protection Information Management System (CPIMS), and lack of standardized data collection, research and evaluation on child protection affect the development of evidence-based interventions, policies and programs. The existing database of 'children in need of special protection' (from the central to the local level) is not systematic and is under utilised.
- The implementation of laws and policies related to protecting and assisting children is still ineffective. This is due to the limited understanding and skills of law enforcement officials, poor social awareness and understanding of the laws and policies related to child protection and low resource allocations. There are gaps in the content of the laws and sub-law legislations, which do not respond to the existing needs for handling the issues of child protection and assistance.
- Child protection issues have generally been addressed through thematic responses. While some actions have worked, this has led to parts of the system operating in silos, leaving underlying causes unaddressed or only solving specific aspects in emergencies.

- The provision of services and support for children and families, including emergency care, is not up to the standard as social workers lack the resources needed to carry out such work. There are very limited options for children to access services as many service points are only concentrated in the capital. On the other hand, the families are still hesitant to report or bring the children's problems to authorities. Most of the problems are resolved at the family, relatives and traditional community levels.
- There is limited information on alternative care for children. It is not clear how many children are living in boarding schools, orphanages, drug rehabilitation centres, centres for children with disabilities, temples and other types of institutions.

III. National Plan of Action for Child Protection System Strengthening (2022-2026)

1. Overall Objective

To ensure that the rights and interests of all children including those in need of special protection, disadvantaged children and children at risk, are protected in accordance with their rights and interests. It also aims to ensure that all children are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy; have a good attitude, knowledge and abilities; have a good life in society and become good successors of the nation.

2. General Directions and Duties

- 1) To strengthen the child protection system (which includes the legislations, personnel, services and resources from the central level to the local level) to a robust, fully functioning child protection system, where all stakeholders are able to perform their roles and responsibilities to protect children in accordance with the legal framework of Lao PDR and international conventions, declarations and commitments related to child protection.
- 2) Build the capacity of parents, guardians, caregivers, and communities to provide care for children, reduce risks, and address issues, such as abuse, exploitation, neglect, and violence, which affect the children's development and to create an environment conducive to the effective protection and assistance of children;
- 3) Ensure that children, families, and communities have access to quality support and services, including special services to prevent and respond to the risks according to the laws and policies of Lao PDR and international standards for child protection.

3. Programmes

The National Plan of Action for Child Protection System Strengthening will focus on the following four areas:

3.1. Programme Area 1: Strengthen legal framework, tools and evidence

3.2. Programme Area 2: Strengthen the social service workforce

3.3. Programme Area 3: Improved child protection prevention and responsive services

3.4. Programme Area 4: Monitoring, data collection and evidence generation

4. Priority Actions

4.1. Programme Area 1: Strengthen Legal Framework, Tools and Evidence

4.1.1. Priority Action 1.1: Improve Legal and Regulatory Framework and Guidelines

- **Priority Activities**

- Conduct a review of the laws and legislation related to child protection considering the core recommendations and the findings of the recent assessment related to the child protection system.
- Review and update the Law on the Protection of the Interests and Rights of Children.
- Develop a Law on social work.
- Develop national guidelines on alternative care and minimum standards for residential care.
- Develop national guidelines for the care and protection of children living with disabilities.
- Develop national guidelines on child online protection.

4.1.2 Priority Action 1.2: Integrate and Mainstream the Child Protection Work into Relevant Sectoral Programmes

- **Priority Activities**

- Disseminate the following documents:
 1. NPA for Child Protection System Strengthening,
 2. Core Recommendations for Strengthening the Child Protection System,
 3. Strategic Guidelines for the Social Service Workforce Development to relevant stakeholders at central and local levels, CSOs and international organizations to integrate this NPA into their programs, plans and projects.
- Share and exchange information on planning, coordination, programme strategies and lessons learned in implementing child protection activities.
- Integrate child protection activities into the National Disaster Reduction and Response Plan and other emergency plans including in response to the pandemic.

4.1.3 Priority Action 1.3: Improve Coordination Mechanism for Child Protection System Strengthening

- **Priority Activities**

- Update the agreement on the organizational structure and the mandates for the Child Protection and Assistance Committee (CPAC).
- Improve the capacity and functioning of the Secretariat and determine the focal points of CPAC.
- Develop the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) of the CPAC.

- Organise annual national-level CPAC meetings every year; provincial CPAC meetings twice a year; district CPAC meetings twice a year.
- Encourage and advocate for the private sector's participation and support in strengthening the child protection system related to the prevention of child labour, and sexual abuse in the tourism sector.

4.1.4 Priority Action 1.4: Increase Capacity to Monitor and Raise Financial Resources for Child Protection

- **Priority Activities**

- Develop a document to provide a case-by-case guide in addressing key child protection issues to improve the knowledge and understanding of the social service workforce.
- Monitor annually the budget allocation to child protection through the Child Protection and Assistance Committee (CPAC) meetings and the reporting of relevant stakeholders, development partners, international organizations, INGOs, and CSOs.
- Collaborate with relevant ministries to establish a tracking code for public financing for child protection.
- Develop a government budget plan for service provision and assistance such as case management support and providing performance enhancement tools.
- Allocate financial resources to conduct CPAC activities and minimum budget allocation for case management at all levels.

4.1.5 Priority Action 1.5: Strengthen International and Regional Collaboration on Child protection, Child rights and Child well-being

- **Priority Activities**

- Implement and monitor recommendations related to child protection.
- Research, provide inputs, share information and implement the ASEAN declarations related to child protection and social welfare. These include the Declaration on the Rights of Children in the Context of Migration, the Declaration on the Protection of Children from All Forms of Online Exploitation and Abuse and the Declaration on Social Service Workforce Strengthening.
- Support projects related to child protection in the five-year programme of the ASEAN Social Welfare and Development Framework.
- Support the participation in international and regional training, study visits, and other events related to child protection and social welfare.

4.2 Programme Area 2: Strengthen the Social Service Workforce

4.2.1 Priority Action 2.1: Professionalize Social Service Workforce

- **Priority Activities**

- Review and update the job descriptions (JD) for social welfare staff at all levels working in the area of child protection.
- Develop a standard Code of Conduct for government authorities at all levels working in the area of child protection, including prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) and child safeguarding.
- Evaluate and update the National University of Laos (NUOL) Bachelor in Social Work curriculum course based on the latest international/regional social work curriculum standards. Provide increased opportunities for practical field experiences and internships as part of the course curriculum and provide professional employment opportunities in practice social work.
- Develop a system of certification and licensing of social workers by including key criteria and national examination/training courses.
- Establish the management database with registration or certification process under MOLSW to certify the social worker profession.
- Conduct a national campaign to promote the social work professionals' role and responsibilities in the community.

4.2.2 Priority Action 2.2: Build Capacity of Sectors Related to Child Protection at the Central and Local Levels.

- **Priority Activities**

- Regularly offer child protection training for the provincial and district social welfare authorities across the country.
- Conduct training sessions for provincial social welfare authorities, focusing on soft skills, including ICT, data management, and Social Behavioural Communication Change (SBCC) skills and new emerging issues such as online violence.
- Develop a training module on alternative care and implement the training for provincial and district CPAC members.
- Develop a manual and train the relevant sectors on psychosocial support and life skills counselling for people who recovered from drug abuse.
- Train LWU staff and relevant sectors on the National Guideline for the Protection and Assistance and Referral for Victims of Trafficking to the Committee for Protection and Assistance of Children.
- Provide training sessions on helpline management, counselling techniques and service referrals.

- Train provincial and district workers from multi-sectors, including Social Welfare, Women, Youth, Health and Education, on psychological first aid and mental health and psychosocial support in emergency training in the target provinces.
- Provide regular on-the-ground and remote mentoring and coaching supports for provincial and district CPAC members on the implementation of child protection work.
- Conduct training of trainers (TOT) on parenting education for relevant stakeholders.
- Support social work students to undergo internships and practical work and create opportunities for social work graduates to work in their fields.
- Capacitate frontline workers and parents/caregivers on the care and protection of children with disabilities.

4.2.3 Priority Action 2.3: Build Capacity of and Operationalize the Child Protection Network (CPN) to Identify and Report on Children Who are at Risk, and Provide Necessary Assistance, including Referral of Children at the Community Level

- **Priority Activities**

- Strengthen the village-level CPNs as a community-based mechanism for the protection and assistance of children. Strengthen the roles and responsibilities of CPN.
- Update the CPN training manual and provide training to the CPAC (Committee for Protection and Assistance of Children) at the district and village levels.
- Develop a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for CPN.
- Provide CPN with standardised performance enhancement tools including but not limited to uniforms, case management templates, reporting templates, home visits do's and don'ts (protocols), referral pathways, code of conduct, mobile airtime, transportation and stationery.

4.3 Programme Area 3: Emergency-response Child Protection Service

4.3.1 Priority Action 3.1: Implement Preventive Services, including Awareness-Raising, Social and Gender Norm Changes and Creating Opportunities for Children, Youth and Families

- **Priority Activities**

- Launch the parenting education package in pilot provinces in conjunction with social protection/livelihood support to families, to encourage the participation of both fathers, mothers and extended family members.
- Review, compile and update existing approaches and materials for adolescent life skills development (21st-century skills development).
- Implement life skills development training for adolescents in the target pilot provinces linking it with livelihood development, TVET, and quality education/scholarship support.

- Assist the children and adolescents who recover from drugs by providing them with vocational training. Raising and contributing funds to create more opportunities for employment and income generation.
- Provide opportunities and platforms for children to participate in provincial, district and village annual planning and review meetings and service provision planning.
- Scale up the 'Children with Disability-support' Project to sensitize parents and communities on the rights of children with disabilities and how to support and care for them.
- Raise awareness of children, parents, and community members on different child protection risks, including promoting service uptakes, sensitizing them on the definition and impact of child protection risks, and promoting positive behaviour changes.
- Develop and disseminate child-friendly IEC materials in Lao language and other ethnic minority languages to raise awareness of child rights and child protection services that are available, including the helpline services.
- Disseminate television (TV), radio programmes and audio messages through community loudspeakers on but not limited to mental health and psychosocial supports (MHPSS), child online protection, and prevention of sexual exploitation, trafficking, violence, and abuse.
- Conduct campaigns on 'ending child marriage', 'ending violence against children in all settings including violence in schools' and 'ending online violence against children'.

4.3.2 Priority Action 3.2: Implement Quality, Integrated Gender and Emergency-responsive Child Protection Services

- **Priority Activities**

- In collaboration with health, education, justice, social protection and other sectors, develop SOPs for case management and referral pathways for abuse, exploitation, neglect, abandonment, and all forms of violence.
- Conduct training on the National Guidelines for the Protection and Assistance and Referral for Victims of Trafficking for the CPAC at the central, provincial, district and village levels.
- Develop guidelines on child safeguarding and a PSEA checklist for organizations working for and with children.
- Expand and operationalize LWU and LYU helpline services in all provinces.
- Provide necessary support to protection shelters and child care centres to protect children and provide counselling, case management, legal support, and rehabilitation services for women and child survivors of violence, abuse, exploitation, and trafficking.

- Implement basic community-based child protection services in selected provinces, which include but are not limited to home visits, family-based care, referrals, and counselling.
- Provide safe spaces for children during emergencies (such as Child-Friendly Spaces) to offer psychosocial support during times of disaster or social hardships.
- Rollout the community-based diversion programme for children in conflict with the law and legal and social assistance to children in contact with the law.

4.4 Programme Area 4: Enhanced Monitoring, Data Collection and Evidence Generation

4.4.1 Priority Action 4.1: Strengthen Monitoring, Review and Data Management

- **Priority Activities**

- Collect and utilize the data (disaggregated by sex, age, location, ethnicity, and disability), on vulnerable children in pilot provinces.
- Set up a digitalized system for Child Protection Network (CPN) reporting and an online dashboard to monitor regular progress and respond rapidly to cases that need immediate interventions.
- Establish a child protection information management system (CPMIS) for timely and comprehensive data collection and data management.
- Conduct a mid-term and final review of the implementation of the National Plan of Action for Child Protection System Strengthening (2022-2026).

4.4.2 Priority Action 4.2: Data Collection, Conduct Research and Evaluation of Child Protection and Assistance

- **Priority Activities**

- Conduct a study on child marriage and adolescent pregnancy, with a focus on their national prevalence and understanding the causes.
- Conduct a study on children and online media.
- Document the process of mapping, planning, developing core recommendations, and piloting the child protection system in Lao PDR.

4.4.3 Priority Action 4.3: Promote Learning and Knowledge Exchange

- **Priority Activities**

- Conduct annual CPAC meetings at all levels to share best practices and promote knowledge sharing on child protection and assistance.
- Attend regional and international workshops, conferences, and meetings to share the experience of Lao PDR's efforts to strengthen the child protection system.
- Host the ASEAN knowledge-sharing workshop on supporting child protection in emergencies.

IV. Implementation Mechanism for the National Plan of Action for Child Protection System Strengthening (2022-2026)

1. Funding Source

The funding needed to implement this National Plan of Action for Child Protection System Strengthening comes from internal sources and external support.

Internal funding sources: the CPAC at the national and local level is in charge of preparing the budget plan; the Ministry of Planning and Investment, in cooperation with the Finance sector, will review and summarize the request and submit it to the National Assembly or Provincial Assembly. Once approved, the Assembly will appropriately allocate funding based on the regulations for implementing the National Plan of Action for Child Protection System Strengthening (2022-2026).

External funding sources: the Committee at the national and local levels are in charge to cooperate with neighbouring countries, international organizations, financial institutions, civil society organizations, individuals and legal entities, both domestic and international to seek technical and financial assistance.

2. Implementation Mechanism

2.1 Central Committee for Protection and Assistance of Children (CPAC)

CPAC at the central level plays the role of leading the implementation and monitoring of the National Plan of Action for Child Protection System Strengthening (2022-2026) by translating the NPA into detailed work plans, programmes and activities. It will also be responsible to raise funds to ensure the implementation and achievement of the goals of the NPA. The Secretariat of the CPAC will play the role of coordinating with relevant ministries and sectors at the central and local levels to implement the NPA. The relevant ministries and sectors at the central and local levels will appoint focal points to coordinate the implementation of the NPA and translate the NPA into work plans, programs, projects and budget plans that are consistent with the development plans of each sector and local area in respective periods.

2.2 Sectors and Organizations

1. Labour and Social Welfare Sector is responsible for the coordination with relevant ministries and the sector at the central and local level in the implementation of the National Plan of Action for Child Protection System Strengthening (2022-2026); MOLSW will summarise and analyse statistics of children with special needs and 'at-risk' children. Furthermore, they will conduct research and determine appropriate measures to provide support to these children, families and communities to overcome the challenges that they face. MOLSW will expand the Child Protection Network at the village level. They are responsible to mobilise technical and financial support from international and national organizations and monitor and encourage the implementation of child protection and assistance activities at the central and local levels.

- 2. The Justice sector** is responsible for the review, formulation and amendment of the laws, to ensure their practicality and compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child in order to ensure effective implementation of the laws. This will be done in coordination with all stakeholders. The Justice sector will also provide legal assistance for all children in contact with the law including child offenders, child victims and child witnesses and promote a community-based diversion programme as an early intervention to address juvenile offences, thereby avoiding the formal judicial processes.
- 3. The Public Security sector** is responsible for the investigation (interrogation, follow-up, evidence searching and prosecution of perpetrators of child abuse, re-education, warning, reprimand, and management) and applying the appropriate investigation methods and measures to protect the victims.
- 4. The Office of People’s Supreme Prosecutor and the People’s Supreme Court** are responsible for ensuring the timely legal proceeding and disposal of cases involving children and juveniles, and coordinating with relevant stakeholders to provide training on the law and legal procedures to relevant staff with the aim to strengthen their capacity in the law enforcement.
- 5. The Education and Sports sector** is responsible for the education of all children. It implies that all children learn and complete compulsory education at the primary and secondary school levels. It is also responsible for improving the quality of education, creating safe environments for children, preventing violence against children in schools, identifying and reporting cases of violence and abuse and referring children in need of specialised services. They are also responsible for revising the social work curriculum and capacitating the social workers with innovative and practical teaching methods.
- 6. The Health sector** is responsible for delivering quality and child-friendly health services. It must be ensured that health personnel are trained to take action on cases of sexual violence, exploitation and abuse. This involves identifying, reporting, and referring the cases to appropriate services and providing timely and appropriate medical care and follow-up to such cases. They are also responsible for ensuring the registration of children who are born at the hospital.
- 7. The Information, Culture, and Tourism sector** are responsible for the advocacy and dissemination of policies, laws, and regulations related to child protection, preventing and combatting the production and dissemination of child pornography and addressing issues of sexual exploitation and abuse of children in the tourism sector.
- 8. The Home Affairs sector** is responsible for overseeing the civil registration and vital statistics system. Birth registration is a part of this ministry. The Home Affairs disseminates detailed information on birth registration, issues birth certificates and organizes mobile registration units in remote areas. It is responsible to ensure that birth registration takes place compulsorily for all children.

9. **The Planning and Investment sector** is responsible for integrating the National Plan of Action for Child Protection System Strengthening into the socio-economic development plan and the state budget plans in each period. It should collaborate with relevant stakeholders to collect and develop a comprehensive and reliable database related to child protection so that the database can be used as a basis for formulating policies, strategies and legislations on child development in each period.
10. **The Finance sector** is responsible for allocating and providing the state budget to ensure the successful implementation of the National Plan of Action for Child Protection System Strengthening.
11. **The Technology and Communications sector** will take the lead in planning, implementing, and monitoring the online protection of children. This includes cybercrimes against children, cyberbullying, online safety, tackling darknets, and taking action against child pornography.
12. **The National Commission for the Advancement of Women and Mothers-Children (NCAWMC)** is responsible for supporting and monitoring the relevant sectors at the central level, local authorities and stakeholders in the implementation of the National Plan of Action for Child Protection System Strengthening (2022-2026). NCAWMC will also support and encourage stakeholders to formulate and revise policies, legislation, strategies, and NPAs related to children. NCAWMC will contribute to mobilising technical and financial support from all sectors of society domestically and internationally. NCAWMC is responsible for CRC reporting and child rights monitoring in the country.
13. **The Lao Women's Union (LWU)** is responsible for promoting parental care to ensure the protection and well-being of children, providing legal assistance, providing counselling and helpline (1362) services to children and their families and providing support and rehabilitating victims of violence so that they can reintegrate positively into their families and society.
14. **The Lao Youth Union (LYU)** is responsible for advocating, educating and raising awareness on children in need of special protection and children at risk, 'young pioneers' and youths from all ethnic groups. LYU provides free helpline services (1554) on mental health and psychological support services to adolescents and young people. It also conducts the helpline in other Lao ethnic languages.
15. **The Lao Front for National Development (LFND)** is responsible for raising awareness and disseminating information to people from ethnic groups, especially those who live in remote areas. The aim is to enable them to understand the policies of the Party and the government towards the protection of children's rights and promoting their best interests.
16. **International Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations, Development Partners, Relevant Civil Society Organizations, and the Private Sector** are important partners in providing technical assistance and funding to implement the National Plan of Action for Child Protection System Strengthening (2022-2026)

3. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting

The CPAC at all levels and all stakeholders must be involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation progress of the National Plan of Action for Child Protection System Strengthening (2022-2026) as follows:

- The Secretariat of the CPAC is the focal point for coordination on the implementation of the National Plan of Action for Child Protection System Strengthening (2022-2026) throughout the country.
- Develop comprehensive tools and systems for the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the NPA to systematically strengthen child protection systems. Training on how to use the system and tools and dissemination of other relevant documents to support the use of these tools must be shared.
- The Provincial and District CPAC will monitor the implementation progress of the National Plan of Action for Child Protection System Strengthening (2022-2026) within their sector and local area and report to the CPAC at the central level on a regular basis.
- The CPAC at the central level will coordinate with the Planning and Investment sector to ensure that child protection and assistance are integrated into the National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSEDPP).
- The CPAC at the central level will organize annual review meetings a year, and meetings at the provincial and district levels twice a year.
- The Secretariat of the CPAC at the central level, in coordination with all relevant stakeholders, will conduct a mid-term review (in 2024) and an end line review (in 2026) to assess the implementation of the National Plan of Action for Child Protection System Strengthening (2022-2026).
- The CPAC will review and report on the implementation of the National Plan of Action for Child Protection System Strengthening (2022-2026) to the Government on a regular basis.

Annex A. Logframe

Outcome 1: Strengthened Legal Framework, Tools, and Evidence				
Output 1.1: Improve Legal and Regulatory Framework and Guidelines				
No.	Activity	Indicator	Expected results by 2026	Responsible
1.1.1	Conduct a review of the laws and legislation related to child protection, keeping in mind to considering the core recommendation for strengthening the child protection system and the assessment findings related to the Child Protection System.	An analytical report on the review of the legal and regulatory framework for child protection is available. (yes/no) Baseline: No report Target: Report available	Increased understanding of the current legal and regulatory framework for child protection and gaps are identified for improvement through the review of the child protection legal and regulatory framework.	- MOJ - CPAC - NCAWMC - CPWG
1.1.2	Review and update the Law on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Children.	The revised Law on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Children is approved by the Government. (yes/no) Baseline: Law is not reviewed Target: Law is reviewed and amended	The Law on Protection of the Rights and Interests of Children is updated.	- MOJ - CPAC - NCAWMC - Secretariat office
1.1.3	Develop the Law on Social Work.	The Law on Social Work is approved. Baseline: No Target: Yes	The Law on Social Work is promulgated and implemented.	- MOLSW - MOJ - NUOL
1.1.4	Develop the National Guidelines on Alternative Care and Minimum Standards for Residential Care Settings.	National Guidelines on Alternative Care and Minimum Standards for Residential Care Settings is approved. Baseline: No Target: Yes	The National Guidelines on Alternative Care and Minimum Standards for Residential Care Settings is made available.	- MOLSW - MOES - MOHA - LWU
1.1.5	Develop general guidelines on providing care and support for children with disabilities.	Guidelines on providing care and protection for children with disabilities is approved. Baseline: No Target: Yes	General guidelines on providing care and protection for children with disabilities are available for parents/caregivers and relevant staff.	- MOLSW - MOH - ACDA
1.1.6	Develop general guidelines on child online protection.	Guidelines on child online protection are available. Baseline: No Target: Yes	General guidelines on child online protection are developed and serve as a basis for implementation of activities by child protection actors.	- NCAWMC - MTC

Output 1.2- Integrate and Mainstream Child Protection into Relevant Sectoral Programmes				
No.	Activity	Indicator	Expected results by 2026	Responsible
1.2.1	Disseminate the NPA for Child Protection System Strengthening, Core Recommendations for Strengthening the Child Protection System and Strategic Guidelines for the Social Service Workforce Development.	NPA, Core recommendations and Strategic Guidelines are disseminated. Baseline: No Target: Yes	Relevant national and sub-national stakeholders, CSO and INGO recognize, understand and integrate child protection into their programme and project planning.	- CPAC at central, provincial and district levels
1.2.2	Share and exchange information on planning, coordination, programme implementation, strategies and lessons learned on implementing child protection activities.	Information on child protection activities is shared and exchanged among the Committees at the central and local levels and other relevant sectors. Baseline: 1 Target: 23 times	Child Protection is included in the relevant sector programmes.	- CPAC at central, provincial and district levels
1.2.3	Integrate child protection activities into the National Disaster Reduction and Response Plan and other emergency plans including in response to the pandemic.	Child Protection activities are included in the national disaster risk reduction (DRR) and emergency plan. Baseline: No Target: Yes	Child protection is included in the DRR and national emergency plans.	- MOLSW - MOH - MOES
Output 1.3: Improve Coordination Mechanism for Child Protection System Strengthening				
No.	Activity	Indicator	Expected results by 2026	Responsible
1.3.1	Upgrade the agreement on the organization structure and the mandates of the Child Protection and Assistance Committee. (CPAC).	CPAC agreement is upgraded to a decree. Baseline: Agreement Target: Decree	The decree on the organization structure and the mandate of the Committee for Protection and Assistance of Children (CPAC) are approved.	- MOLSW
1.3.2	Improve agreement of appointment the Secretariate and determine focal points of CPAC.	An agreement of appointment of the Secretariats and the focal point of CPAC is available. Baseline: No Target: Yes	The secretariat of CPAC can work more efficiently and effectively.	- MOLSW
1.3.3	Develop the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) of the CPAC.	The SOP of central, provincial, district and village CPAC are available. Baseline: No Target: Yes	CPAC SOP serves as a basis for the implementation of child protection work.	- MOLSW - CPAC

1.3.4	Organize regular National CPAC meetings at least once a year; Provincial CPAC meetings twice a year; District CPAC meetings twice a year.	# of National, provincial and district-level CPAC meetings organized. Baseline: 0 Target: 69	CPAC meetings create a space for coordination and oversight of the child protection activities in Lao PDR with participation from multi-sectors.	- MOLSW - CPAC at central, province and district
1.3.5	Encourage and advocate the private sector's participation and support in strengthening the child protection system, such as the prevention of child labour, and sexual abuse in the tourism sector.	# of a pilot partnership opportunity with the private sector is identified to engage and support the child protection system. Baseline: 0 Target: 3	The private sector contributes to the implementation of this NPA to prevent child labour and sexual abuse in the tourism sector.	- MOLSW - CPAC at central, province and district - NCAWMC

Output 1.4: Increase Capacity to Monitor and Raise Financial Resources for Child Protection

No.	Activity	Indicator	Expected results by 2026	Responsible
1.4.1	Develop an advocacy brief or a business case on the investment in SSWD.	A business case or advocacy brief on CPSS and SSWD is available. Baseline: 0 Target: 10	A business case or advocacy brief on CPSS and SSWD is available and used for resource mobilization and allocation.	- MOLSW
1.4.2	Monitor the budget allocation to child protection annually through the CPAC meetings and reporting from relevant stakeholders, development partners, international organizations, INGOs, and CSO.	Annual review of the budget allocation for child protection conducted. Baseline: 0 Target: 5	Child Protection budget utilization/planning for child protection is monitored annually.	- MOLSW - CPAC at central, province and district
1.4.3	Collaborate with relevant ministries for establishing a tracking code for public financing for child protection.	Budget code established for child protection. Baseline: No Target: Yes	Child Protection budget expenditure can be tracked through a government system.	- MOLSW - MOF - CPAC at central level
1.4.4	Develop a government budget plan for service provision and assistance such as case management support and providing performance-enhancing tools.	A budget plan is available for government consideration. Baseline: No Target: Yes	A budget plan for service provision and assistance such as case management support and performance-enhancing tools is considered.	- MOLSW - CPAC at central, province and district
1.4.5	Allocate financial resources to conduct CPAC activities and minimum budget allocation for case management at all levels.	The government budget (LAK) is allocated to convene CPAC meetings and support case management at all levels. Baseline: No Target: Yes	National, provincial and district annual budget plans include the budget for CPAC meetings at central, province and district.	- MOLSW - CPAC at central, province and district

Output 1.5: Strengthen International and Regional Collaboration on Child Protection				
No.	Activity	Indicator	Expected results by 2026	Responsible
1.5.1	Implement and monitor the ASEAN recommendations related to child protection.	ASEAN recommendations related to child protection are implemented. Baseline: No Target: Yes	ASEAN recommendations are implemented and included in child protection work in Lao PDR.	- MOLSW - NCAWMC - CPAC at central, province and district
1.5.2	Conduct research, provide inputs, share information and implement the regional and ASEAN Declarations related to child protection and social welfare. including the Declaration on the Rights of Children in the Context of Migration; Declaration on the Protection of Children from All Forms of Online Exploitation and Abuse and Declaration on Social Service Workforce Strengthening	The content of the regional and ASEAN declarations on child protection, and social welfare has been discussed, and the inputs are provided for those declarations. Baseline: 5 Target: 5	Increased regional cooperation at the ASEAN level for Child Protection, and sharing information on the implementation of the Conventions and ASEAN Declarations related to social welfare and child protection, including the Declaration on the Rights of Children in the Context of Migration, Declaration on the Protection of Children from All Forms of Online Exploitation and Abuse, Declaration on Social Service Workforce Strengthening and ASEAN Reaffirmation of Commitment to Advancing the Rights of the Child.	- MOLSW - NCAWMC - CPAC at central, province and district.
1.5.3	Support projects related to child protection in the five year program of the ASEAN Social Welfare and Development Framework.	Lessons learned on child protection and assistance related to the programme framework is shared/exchanged. Baseline: 0 Target: 2 times	The cooperation among ASEAN countries strengthens child protection systems.	- MOLSW
1.5.4	Support the participation in international and regional training, study visit, and others related to child protection and social welfare.	# of international and regional training and workshops attended. Baseline: 2 (2021) Target: TBD	Increased knowledge accumulated from international and regional learning.	- MOLSW

Outcome 2: Strengthening the Social Service Workforce

Output 2.1: Professionalize Social Service Workforce

No.	Activity	Indicator	Expected results by 2026	Responsible
2.1.1	Review and update the JD for social welfare staff at all levels working in the area of child protection.	Updated JD for social welfare staff is available. Baseline: No Target: Yes	Social Welfare staff can work effectively and efficiently.	- MOLSW
2.1.2	Develop a 'Code of Conduct' document for government staff at all levels working in the area of child protection, including PSEA and child safeguarding.	The 'Code of Conduct' document for government staff at all levels working in the area of child protection is available. Baseline: No Target: Yes	The government staff at all levels are aware of and understand the code of conduct for the protection of children from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.	- MOLSW
2.1.3	Evaluate and update the National University of Laos (NUOL) social work curriculum course based on the latest and international/ regional social work study standards and provide increasing social work practice opportunities.	The updated NUOL social work curriculum is available. Baseline: No Target: Yes (2022-2023)	University social work course is competent to raise a cadre of qualified social workers by offering practical exposure to social work.	- NUOL - MOLSW
2.1.4	Develop a system for registration, certification, and licensing of social workers, including key criteria and national examination/training courses.	A national registration, certification, and licensing system for the social service workforce is established. Baseline: No Target: Yes	The social work profession is certified and monitored through the Government's HR registry/management database.	- MOLSW - NUOL
2.1.5	Establish the registry/ management database under MOLSW to certify the social worker profession.	The database on registration, certification and licensing for the social service workforce is established.	The social work profession is certified and monitored through the MOLSW registry/ management database.	- MOLSW - NUOL
2.1.6	Conduct a national campaign to promote the social service workforce's role and responsibility to society.	# of people reached through the campaign. Baseline: 0 Target: 100,000	Increased understanding by the general public on the role and responsibility of the social service workforce and their value.	- MOLSW - NUOL

Output 2.2: Build Capacity of Child Protection and Allied Sectors at the Central, Provincial and District Levels				
No.	Activity	Indicator	Expected results by 2026	Responsible
2.2.1	Regularly offer child protection (refresher) training for the provincial and district social welfare authorities across the country.	# of sub-national LSW staff received child protection training. Baseline: 0 Target: at least 50 people per year	Sub-national LSW staff have strengthened their knowledge of their roles and responsibilities regarding the implementation of child protection activities.	- MOLSW
2.2.2	Conduct training for the provincial social welfare authorities, focusing on soft skills, including ICT, data management, and SBCC skills, and new emerging issues, such as online violence.	In-service training module for sub-national LSW developed. Baseline: No Target: Yes	The social service workforce has improved their soft skills including ICT, data management, and SBCC skills and on new emerging issues, such as online violence.	- MOLSW
2.2.3	Develop a training module on alternative care and implement the training for provincial and district CPAC members.	A training module on alternative care is developed. Baseline: No Target: Yes	The provincial and district CPAC members are trained in alternative care.	- MOLSW
2.2.4	Develop a manual and train the relevant sectors on psychosocial support and life skills counselling for people who recovered from drug abuse.	A manual on psychosocial support for people recovering from drug abuse is available. Baseline: No Target: Yes	The Social Welfare staff have the knowledge and skill to provide counselling for people who recovered from drug abuse.	- MOLSW
2.2.5	Train LWU staff and relevant sectors on the guidelines for prevention and assistance to victims/survivors of violence and trafficking, case management, and counselling techniques.	# of LWU staff received training on violence, trafficking, case management, and counselling. Baseline: 117 (2021) Target: 300	LWU staff can provide quality services, including case management and counselling, based on the new guideline on prevention and assistance to victims/survivors of violence and trafficking.	- LWU
2.2.6	Train relevant sectors on helpline management, counselling techniques, and service referrals.	# of LWU and LYU staff trained in helpline management. Baseline: 117 (2021) Target: 300	LWU and LYU staff can provide quality mobile helpline services.	- LWU - LYU
2.2.7	Train provincial and district workers from multi-sectors, including Social Welfare, Women, Youth, Health and Education, on psychological first aid and mental health and psychosocial support in emergency training in the target provinces.	# of people received psychological first aid in emergency training. Baseline: 55 Target: 500	Strengthened capacity of provincial and district authorities to provide psychological first aid to people affected by the emergency.	- MOLSW - LWU - MOH - MOES

2.2.8	Provide regular on-the-ground mentoring and coaching support for provincial and district CPAC members on the implementation of child protection work.	# of people who received mentoring and coaching visits. Baseline: 0 Target: at least 234	Improved capacity and operationalization of the social service workforce through coaching and mentoring support.	- MOLSW - CPAC
2.2.9	Conduct Training of Trainers on parenting education for relevant stakeholders.	# of LWU staff received training on parenting education. Baseline: 100 (in 2021) Target: 500	LWU, MOHA, MOLSW, and their partners have enhanced knowledge of how to implement parenting education programmes.	- LWU - MOHA - MOLSW - CPAC
2.2.10	Support the social work student to have an internship in the field (practical work) and create the opportunity for the social work graduate student to work in their fields.	# of social work students completed the fieldwork. Baseline: 0 Target: 50	The social work students have learned practical work alongside the theory in the area of social work.	- MOLSW - NUOL
2.2.11	Train frontline workers and parents/caregivers on care and protection for children with disabilities.	# of people received training on care and protection for children with disabilities. Baseline: 210 (2021) Target: 500	An increased number of frontline workers and parents/caregivers know how to care for and protect children with disabilities.	- MOLSW - MOH - MOEs

Output 2.3: Build Capacity of and Operationalize the Child Protection Network (CPN) to Identify, Report and Respond to Child Protection Cases at the Village Level

No.	Activity	Indicator	Expected results by 2026	Responsible
2.3.1	Establish more village CPNs in pilot provinces and train them on the roles and responsibilities of CPN, including the village coordinator.	# of villages that established and trained CPN. Baseline: 2,814 villages (in 2021) Target: 500 villages	In target villages, CPN is established and know how to perform their duties and responsibilities for child protection.	- MOLSW - POLSW - DOLSW
2.3.2	Update the Child Protection Network (CPN) training manual and train Child Protection and Assistance Committee (CPAC) at the district and village level	Child Protection Network (CPN) training manual is updated, and Child Protection and Assistance Committee (CPAC) at the district and village levels are trained. Baseline: 49 (2021) Target: 500	Child Protection Network (CPN) training manual is revised, Child Protection and Assistance Committee (CPAC) at the district and village levels are trained.	- MOLSW - POLSW

2.3.3	Develop an SOP on CPN work.	CPN SOP is developed. Baseline: No Target: yes # of CPN members received standard job aid tools Baseline: 0 Target: 1,000	Child Protection and Assistance Committee at the village level can function systematically on child protection.	- MOLSW - POLSW
2.3.4	Provide CPNs with the standard CPN job aid tools including but not limited to branded uniforms, case management templates, reporting templates, home visits do's and don'ts, referral pathways, code of conducts, mobile airtime, transportation and stationery.	# of Child Protection and Assistance Committee at the village level received the Job Aid Tools to implement CPN work. Baseline: 0 Target: 2,000	The CPNs are well-equipped with the necessary tools to effectively perform their work.	- MOLSW

Outcome 3: Improved Child Protection Preventive and Responsive Services

Output 3.1: Implement Preventive Services, including Awareness-raising, Social and Gender Norm Changes and Creating Opportunities for Children, Youth and Families

No.	Activity	Indicator	Expected results by 2026	Responsible
3.1.1	Launch the parenting education package in pilot provinces in conjunction with social protection/livelihood support to families involving both fathers and mothers and extended family members.	# of parents and caregivers who participated in parenting education sessions. Baseline: 554 (in 2020-21) Target: 1,300	Parents and caregivers have increased knowledge of positive parenting and provide appropriate care for their children.	- LWU - MOHA - MOLSW
3.1.2	Review, compile and update existing approaches and materials for adolescent life skill development (skill development in 21 st century) to align with the current situation.	A comprehensive adolescent life skill development package is developed. Baseline: No Target: Yes	Life skills development programme for adolescents is updated in a comprehensive manner.	- NCAWMC
3.1.3	Implement life skills development training for adolescents in linkage with livelihood development, TVET, and quality education/scholarship supports.	# of girls and boys who received life skills development training. Baseline: 126 Target: 630	Girls and boys are empowered to prepare for their smooth transition to adulthood and explore different life opportunities.	- NCAWMC

3.1.4	Provide opportunities and platforms for children to participate in provincial/district/village annual planning and review meetings and service design meetings.	# of CPAC meetings at province, district and village participated by children. Baseline: 0 Target: 30	Girls and boys have a platform to share their opinions, participate and influence decision-making on activities related to their well-being.	- CPAC at central, province and district - NCAWMC
3.1.5	Scale-up 'Children with the Disability' - support project to sensitize parents and communities on the rights of children with disabilities and how to support and care for them.	# of children with disabilities supported with the care and protection project. Baseline: 106 Target: 600	Children with disabilities receive care and protection tailored to their needs.	- MOLSW - MOH - MOES
3.1.6	Raise awareness of children, parents, and community members on different child protection risks including promoting service uptakes, sensitizing them on the definition, the impact of child protection risks, and promoting positive behaviour changes .	# of children, parents, and community members know where to seek help in case of violence, exploitation, and abuse. Baseline: 4,000 Target: 20,000	Children, parents, and community members know where to seek help in case of violence, exploitation, and abuse.	- LWU - MOLSW - MICT - LYU - NCAWMC
3.1.7	Develop and disseminate child-friendly IEC materials in Lao and ethnic minority languages to raise awareness of child rights and services available, including helpline services.	# of IEC materials developed in ethnic minority languages. Baseline: 4 Target: 8	Children in need of special protection and children who are at risk know where to seek help.	- MOLSW - LWU - LYU
3.1.8	Disseminate TV and radio programmes and audio messages through community loudspeakers on child protection including but not limited to mental health and psychosocial supports (MHPSS), child online protection, and prevention of sexual exploitation, trafficking, violence, and abuse	# of people reached by the TV/radio programmes, community loudspeakers on the PSEA. Baseline: 3.4 million Target: 4 million	People have increased knowledge of how to prevent and respond to different child protection issues, including mental health, psychosocial well-being, online protection, violence, trafficking, etc.	- MICT - MOLSW - LWU - LYU - LFND
3.1.9	Conduct an evidence-based behaviour change campaign on ending child marriage and violence in all settings including schools and online.	# of people reached by the campaign. Baseline: n/a Target: 10,000	Increased understanding of the impact of violence and early marriage.	- LWU - NCAMC - MICT - LYU - LFND
3.1.10	Assist the children and adolescents who recovered from drugs by providing vocational training and contributing funding to job creation, income generation and job opportunities.	# of children-adolescents received vocational training and grants. Baseline: 0 Target: 1,800	Children – adolescents who recovered from drug abuse have jobs/employment and be able to stand on themselves.	- MOLSW - Ministry of Agriculture and Forest

Output 3.2: Implement Quality, Integrated, and Gender- and Emergency-responsive Child Protection Services				
No.	Activity	Indicator	Expected results by 2026	Responsible
3.2.1	In collaboration with Health, Education, Justice, Social Protection, and other sectors, develop SOPs for case management and referral pathways for victims of abuse, exploitation, neglect and all form of violence.	SOPs for case management and referral pathway is available. Baseline: No Target: Yes	Child protection actors and allies especially in the health, education, justice, social protection, and other sectors understand and fulfill their responsibilities in providing timely and appropriate support to women and child victims of violence and abuse.	- MOLSW - LWU - MOH - MOES - MOJ - Prosecutor - LYU
3.2.2	Conduct training on the National Guideline for the Protection and Assistance and Referral for Victims of Trafficking to the Committee for Protection and Assistance of Children at target provinces, districts and villages.	# of people trained on the National Guideline for the Protection and Assistance and Referral for Victims of Trafficking. Baseline: 0 Target: 500	The CPAC at the provinces, district and village levels have strengthened knowledge on how to protect, assist and provide referral services for the victims of trafficking.	- LWU - MOLSW
3.2.3	Develop general guidelines on child safeguarding and PSEA checklist for institutions and organizations and staff working for and with children.	Guidelines on child safeguarding and PSEA checklist are developed. Baseline: No Target: Yes	Organizations, institutions and staff working for and with children understand the need for the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA).	- MOLSW - CPAC - LWU
3.2.4	Expand LWU and LYU helpline services to operate in all provinces.	# of people who received mobile helpline counselling service. Baseline: 2,353 (2021) Target: 5,000	Existing Government helpline systems are strengthened and expanded to provide counselling services for the victims and survivors of trafficking, violence, and other maltreatment issues.	- LWU - LYU
3.2.5	Support child protection shelters/ child care centres in case management, and provide counselling services and legal aid for women and children who survive all forms of violence and trafficking.	# of provinces with protection shelters to provide case management for women and children who survive all forms of violence and trafficking. Baseline: 3 (2021) Target: additional 5	Government protection shelters are expanded to support the needs of survivors of violence.	- LWU - MOLSW - CSO
3.2.6	Provide support on case management in target provinces through community participation, including case identification, reporting, referral, home visits, counselling, follow up and monitoring.	# of children supported through case management. Baseline: n/a Target: 500	Increased number of children supported through case management at the community level.	- MOLSW - LWU - CPN

3.2.7	Provide safe spaces for children (such as Child-Friendly Spaces) to offer child-friendly psychosocial support during times of disaster or social hardship where relevant.	# of children provided with psychosocial support or safe space during an emergency. Baseline: 3,000 (2019) Target: (Based on the actual number)	Children have access to safe spaces and psychosocial support during emergencies.	- MOLSW - MOES - MOH - LWU
3.2.8	Continue to roll out the community-based diversion programme for children in conflict with the law and legal and social assistance to children in contact with the law.	# of children in conflict with the law diverted from the court procedure (Based on the actual number). # of children in conflict with the law provided with legal and social assistance (Based on the actual number).	Strengthened justice for children services and children in contact with the law are diverted from the formal court procedure in line with their rights.	- MOJ - JJCC - MOLSW

Outcome 4: Enhanced Monitoring, Data Collection, and Evidence Generation

Output 4.1: Strengthen Monitoring, Review, and Data Management

No.	Activity	Indicator	Expected results by 202	Responsible
4.1.1	Collect and use data on vulnerable children in pilot provinces with disaggregation by sex, age, location, ethnicity, and disability.	# of villages with data collection on vulnerable children completed. Baseline: 1,284 Target: 1,784	The well-being of vulnerable children is monitored regularly.	- MOLSW - CPAC at the village level
4.1.2	Set up a digitalized system for Child Protection Network (CPN) reporting and an online dashboard to monitor regular progress and respond rapidly to cases that need immediate interventions.	A digitalized reporting system is established. Baseline: No Target: Yes	CPN reporting is digitalized.	- MOLSW
4.1.3	Establish a child protection information management system (CPIMS) for data collection and management on time	A CPIMS is established based on the Lao context. Baseline: No Target: Yes	Child protection data is systematically collected, managed, and used.	- MOLSW
4.1.4	Conduct a mid-term and final review of the implementation of the NPA for Child Protection System Strengthening.	# of review meetings on the implementation of the NPA conducted. Baseline: 0 Target: 2	Lessons learned, best practices, and evidence around the implementation of the child protection system strengthening are monitored, shared, and used for adaptation and scale-up.	- MOLSW - CPAC

Output 4.2 Conduct Research and Evidence Generation				
No.	Activity	Indicator	Expected results by 2026	Responsible
4.2.1	Conduct a study on child marriage and adolescent pregnancy to understand the causes or factors leading to child marriage and adolescent pregnancy.	A study on child marriage and adolescent pregnancy is completed. Baseline: No Target: Yes	Evidence on the adolescent pathways to child marriage and adolescent pregnancy is generated for policy/ programme use.	- NCAWMC - LWU - LYU
4.2.2	Conduct a study on children and online media.	A study on children's lives online completed. Baseline: No Target: Yes	Evidence on children's lives online is generated for policy/ programme use.	- NCAWMC - MOCT
4.2.3	Document the process of mapping, planning, core recommendations, and piloting the child protection system in Lao PDR.	A documentation report on the process of mapping, planning, core recommendations, and piloting the child protection system is available. Baseline: No Target: Yes	The child protection system is improved and strengthened.	- MOLSW
Output 4.3: Promote Learning and Knowledge Exchange				
No.	Activity	Indicator	Expected results by 2026	Responsible
4.3.1	Use annual CPAC meetings at the national and sub-national levels to share best practices and promote knowledge sharing.	# of annual CPAC meetings at all levels conducted. Baseline: 0 Target: 50	Child Protection issues, best practices, challenges, and lessons learned are regularly shared and discussed among relevant stakeholders.	- MOLSW - CPAC at central, province and district
4.3.2	Attend regional and international workshops, conferences, and meetings to share the experience of Lao PDR in strengthening the child protection system.	# of regional and international workshops, conferences, and meetings participated by the Lao delegation. Baseline: 0 Target: 5	Lao PDR's progress, achievements, and experiences in Child Protection are widely disseminated at the regional and international levels for knowledge sharing.	- MOLSW - NCAWMC - JJCC
4.3.3	Host the ASEAN knowledge-sharing workshop on supporting child protection.	# of a workshop organized. Baseline: 0 Target: 2	Knowledge and best practices around child protection system strengthening work are promoted in ASEAN.	- MOLSW

Annex B. Abbreviation and Acronyms

ACDA	Aid Children with Disability Association
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CFS	Child-Friendly Space
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CPAC	Child Protection and Assistance Committee
CPIMS	Child Protection Information Management System
CPN	Child Protection Network
CPSS	Child Protection System Strengthening
CPWG	Child Protection Working Group
CRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRVS	Civil Registration and Vital Statistics
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
DOLSW	District Office of Labour and Social Welfare
ECD	Early Childhood Development
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
HR	Human Resource
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IT	Information Technology
JD	Job Description
JJCC	Juvenile Justice Cooperation Committee
KOICA	Korea International Cooperation Agency
Lao PDR	Lao People's Democratic Republic
LDC	Least Developed Country
LFND	Lao Front for National Development
LSIS	Lao Social Indicator Survey
LWU	Lao Women's Union
LYU	Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union
MICT	Ministry of Information, Culture, and Tourism
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
MOES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOH	Ministry of Health

MOHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MOJ	Ministry of Justice
MOLSW	Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
MOPS	Ministry of Public Security
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NA	National Assembly of the Lao PDR
NCAWMC	National Commission for Advancement of Women, Mothers and Children
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPA	National Plan of Action
NSEDP	National Socio-Economic Development Plan
NUOL	National University of Laos
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
PFA	Psychological First Aid
POLSW	Provincial Office of Labour and Social Welfare
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
PSA	Public Speaking Announcement
PSEA	Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SSWD	Social Service Workforce Development
ToR	Terms of Reference
TV	Television
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education Training
UN	United Nations
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USB	Universal Serial Bus
VAC	Violence Against Children
VMU	Village Mediation Unit
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization

Annex C. Definition and Key Concepts

Abuse: Any act or omission that physically or morally harms a child, sexual abuse of a child, or incitement of a child to commit a crime or to do something that is physically or morally harmful¹. Abuse includes all forms of physical, sexual, psychological, or emotional ill-treatment².

Child: According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), ‘child’ refers to anyone younger than 18 years.

Child and family welfare system: The child and family welfare system refers to those approaches within both communities and within the state-administered social welfare system (or social protection system, where applicable) that promote children’s well-being and protection while enhancing the capacity of families and communities to fulfill their responsibilities³.

Child marriage: Defined as a formal marriage or informal union before 18 years of age⁴.

Child protection: Defined as preventing and responding to abuse, violence, exploitation, and neglect⁵. It applies to the duty of individuals, families, communities, organizations, and governments towards children in their care.

Child protection actors: Child protection actors refer to formal and non-formal institutions, organisation, groups, and individuals who are taking part in different aspects of the child protection system at national, provincial, district, and community levels.

Child Protection Hub (CP-Hub): This term is used to describe integrated child protection resource desks comprised of both government and NGO social workers or child protection professionals.

Child Protection System: A child protection system can be defined as certain formal and informal structures, functions, and capacities that have been assembled to prevent and respond to violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation of children⁶.

Child well-being: From a child rights perspective well-being can be defined as the realisation of children’s rights and the fulfillment of the opportunity for every child to be all she or he can be. The degree to which this is achieved can be measured in terms of positive child outcomes, whereas negative outcomes and deprivation point to the denial of children’s rights⁷.

Children without parental care: Children whose parents or guardians do not provide guardianship, care, and upbringing⁸.

¹ Government of Lao PDR. Law on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Children. Article 2, point 15. December 2006.

² Save the Children: <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/keyword/child-abuse.http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se/node/2144>. Accessed December 2013.

³ Krueger, Alexander and Stephanie Delaney, “An Overview of the Role of a Social Welfare System for Child Protection and Promoting Children’s Well-Being”, in East Asia and the Pacific Regional Child Protection Strategy: Toolkit. UNICEF EAPRO: Bangkok, 2008.

⁴ http://www.unicef.org/protection/57929_58008.html. Accessed May 2014.

⁵ http://www.unicef.org/chinese/protection/files/What_is_Child_Protection.pdf. Accessed May 2014.

⁶ A Better Way to Protect ALL Children: The Theory and Practice of Child Protection Systems. Conference Report, UNICEF 2013 p.3

⁷ Bradshaw, J., Hoelscher, P. and Richardson, D. (2006) An index of child well-being in the European Union, Social Indicators Research. 10.1007/s11205-006-9024-z.

⁸ Government of Lao PDR. Law on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Children. Article 2, point 5. December 2006.

Customary law and practice: Social, cultural, and traditional practices used for village administration that may not be formally authorised or stated in national law.

Community: A group of people who live in some proximity to one another, support and collaborate, and often share common interests.

Congruence: This concept is generally understood to be the quality or state of agreeing or coinciding. Systems are congruent if they are consistent and interact positively with one another. CP assessment was designed in part to examine the extent to which the existing child and family welfare system in Lao PDR is congruent with the national, regional, and local child-caring and child protection realities. It also investigated the nature and quality of the dynamic between the functions and services of the formal system on one hand and community practices along with the needs and perspectives of children, families, and communities on the other.

Community practices: This term is used to encompass a range of practices stemming from community beliefs, values, and principles. It includes ‘informal’ approaches as well as those that did not necessarily originate in the community or were not initiated independently by community members but that are nonetheless community-endorsed and now employed without any organizational direction or management from those within the formal system⁹.

Exploitation: Refers to the use of children for someone else’s advantage, gratification, or profit, often resulting in unjust, cruel, and harmful treatment of the child. These activities are to the detriment of the child’s physical or mental health, education and moral or social-emotional development. This covers manipulation, misuse, abuse, victimization, oppression, and ill-treatment¹⁰. Manifestations include child labour, commercial sexual exploitation, child trafficking, and child begging.

Family: The term is used as shorthand to refer to those with in the caring circle of a child. Membership in this caring circle varies according to culture and circumstance. For example, in some societies, the care environment of a child is limited to the nuclear family or household. In others, children are cared for in broad webs of relatedness and connection, encompassing members of the extended family, close kin who are not co-resident, and close, sometimes unrelated, individuals with whom they may or may not reside. Despite having their caring circle, children are often members of the caring circles of other boys and girls, for example as sibling caregivers. Individuals from the community or service providers who are not providing daily emotional, physical, and psychological care to children are not considered family under this definition¹¹. In the Lao context, ‘family’ refers to a “basic social unit, which is comprised of the husband; wife, children or other family members have relations and stay together under the registration of the family records (book).”¹²

⁹ Child Frontiers. Research Manual: Assessment of the Child and Family Welfare System in Lao PDR. 2013.

¹⁰ Taken from Save the Children UK, Child Protection Training Manual Facilitator’s Guide for Teacher Training, Southern Sudan, 2008.

¹¹ Child Frontiers. Research Manual: Assessment of the Child and Family Welfare System in Lao PDR. 2013.

¹² Lao PDR Family Law, Article 1/1, 2008.

Formal system: This term is used to refer to the social construct that supports and enables the development of programmes and services provided by organized bodies, such as governments, civil society organizations (including international and national non-government, community-based and faith-based organizations, and others) and private sector actors. Some traditional structures might be recognized and organized by governments and, in some contexts, may be considered as part of the formal system.¹³

Neglect: The failure of parents or guardians to provide care, education, encouragement, and the conditions necessary for the development of children, such as health care, nutrition, safe shelter, education, and moral development based on the economic conditions of the family.¹⁴

Prevention services: Services, programmes, and accessible information designed to enhance the capacity of families and communities to keep children safe and cared for. It includes efforts aimed at promoting and supporting family welfare and reducing the probability of harm as well as early interventions to address existing family challenges and threats to children’s well-being.¹⁵

Response services: Refer to child protection interventions that respond to circumstances in which a child is at risk of harm or has been abused, exploited, neglected, abandoned, or left without appropriate family care. These services seek to reduce the possibility of the recurrence of harm and to restore to the child a sense of well-being.¹⁶

Social welfare system: Social welfare refers to a sense of human well-being that exists where “social problems are managed, where human needs are met and when social opportunities are maximized”.¹⁷ A social welfare system is the organization of these services and supports the general population. Concerning children and families specifically, it refers to the promotion of the well-being and protection of boys and girls as well as the provision of support to families and communities to enhance their capacity to better meet their responsibilities to children¹⁸.

Social protection: Social protection refers to the set of public measures, including cash benefits, employment generation, and social insurance, provided to certain citizens identified as needing protection from economic and social distress.¹⁹

Trafficking: Refers to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of persons, using the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power, or a position of vulnerability or the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for exploitation²⁰.

¹³ Child Frontiers. Research Manual: Assessment of the Child and Family Welfare System in Lao PDR. 2013

¹⁴ Government of Lao PDR. Law on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Children. Article 2, point 4. December 2006.

¹⁵ Child Frontiers. Research Manual: Assessment of the Child and Family Welfare System in Lao PDR. 2013.

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Midgley, 1997, cited in Krueger and Delaney, 2008.

¹⁸ As defined by Krueger and Delaney, 2008.

¹⁹ Sheila B. Kamerman and Shirley Gatenio Gabel, Social Protection for Children and their Families: A Global Overview, UNICEF, 2006.

²⁰ Palermo Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, Article 3.

Violence: Violence is defined as the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, that results or is likely to result in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation²¹.

²¹ United Nations, World Report on Violence Against Children, 2006.

Disclaimer:

This publication has been funded by the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program. The views expressed in this publication are the author's alone and are not necessarily the views of the Australian Government.

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