

UN CESCR 55th session

Review of THAILAND

Additional Submission to inform the review of Thailand

by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights during its 55<sup>th</sup> session, 1-19 June, 2015

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## BACKGROUND

This supplementary submission highlights a few main issues that Plan International Thailand, The Life Skills Development Foundation, Pippala Scholarship Foundation, National Catholic Commission on Migration, and Childline Thailand Foundation wish to bring to the attention of the UN CESCR.

The above mentioned NGOs are members of the CRC Coalition Thailand. CRC Coalition Thailand is a coalition that comprises of 61 NGOs that provide their services to children under the age of 18. The Coalition works with various government and NGO stakeholders to safeguard the rights of every child as outlined by the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of a Child (CRC).

## SUGGESTED RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Enact specific measures, including legislation, programs, and budget allocations to eliminate obstacles in access to education by the indigenous and isolated children in Thailand.
2. Increase opportunities available to an indigenous child to fulfill their economic, social and cultural rights.
3. Government should support and cooperate with non-governmental child helplines, drop-in centers, community outreach programs to effectively prevent and successfully remedy instances of violation of the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of children in Thailand - in particular the children of indigenous or otherwise marginalized or excluded populations.
4. Enact legislation that fully prohibits exploitation of children within the entertainment and cultural sectors - especially such harmful practices as "child boxing".
5. Amend the Boxing Act of Thailand, 1999 to raise the minimum age required for registration as a professional boxer from 15 to 18.
6. Amend the Boxing Act of Thailand, 1999 to mandatory require parental consent for each and every fight or public performance by a boxer below 18 years of age, and require protective gear to be worn during all fights by fighters below the age of 18.



7. Establish and support established mechanisms created by other stakeholders for reporting and seeking a remedy for a child that falls a victim to exploitation within the entertainment and cultural sector – such as child helplines, drop-in centers, outreach based interventions, etc.
8. Enact legislation that will mandate a minimum level of compulsory sexuality and reproductive health education.
9. Implement and support implementation by other stakeholders of campaigns to promote knowledge of sexuality and reproductive health education.
10. Implement and support implementation by other stakeholders of educational awareness programs to promote knowledge and understanding of sexuality and reproductive health by parents and all of the professionals that deal with children, including law enforcement officials and corrections officers.
11. Implement certification procedure for civil servants overseeing home schooling and implement measures to improve administration and procedures for families that choose to select home schooling as an alternative.

## SUGGESTED ISSUES AND QUESTIONS FOR THE THAI DELEGATION

### 1. Issues and questions on the Rights of Indigenous Children:

There are many indigenous tribes and peoples living within the borders of Thailand. Big part of them still, until this day do not have Thai citizenship and are currently stateless. Such tribes and peoples Lahu, Akha, Liso, Pakkayo, Muso, Moken, Moklen, Urak Lavo, etc. are often living in remote and isolated areas – mountainous jungle or islands. Children of these tribes are often unable to reach fulfillment of their rights.

To illustrate one of the many obstacles that children are facing – Ao Bon School on Surin Island (an island off the Andaman Coast of Thailand populated by Moken people – population is approximately 250) had been established in 2005 under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and had been operational since. Every year 50-70 Moken students had been attending the school as it is the only source of education on the island. However, throughout all these years, only a curriculum of four primary years of education had been taught there, with no improvements or advancements. Until now, there had been no certificates of education issued to any student that had completed the local curriculum. Without such a certificate none of the students were able to pursue any further education opportunities.

- 1.1. What specific measures, including legislation, programs, and budget allocations have been taken to eliminate obstacles in access to education by the indigenous and isolated children in Thailand?
- 1.2. Which avenues for reporting and seeking a remedy are currently available to an indigenous child that finds themselves in conditions that obstruct the full enjoyment of their economic, social and cultural rights?



## 2. Issues and questions on Children in the entertainment and cultural sectors:

Thailand does not have a specific legislation to protect children who enter the entertainment industry. There are no mechanisms to protect children from the situations of exploitation both by external agents and their own guardians, especially in such areas where material gains are high, e.g. television, motion picture and music industries etc. Some areas, such as "child boxing" are also potentially very harmful to child's further development and future well-being.

- 2.1. What specific measures, including legislation, programs, and budget allocations have been taken to protect rights of the children being exploited for the purpose of entertainment?
- 2.2. Which avenues for reporting and seeking a remedy are currently available to a child being exploited in the entertainment sector?
- 2.3. What is the reason for such harmful practices as "child boxing" still being utilized by the entertainment sector?

## 3. Issues and questions on Sexuality and Reproductive Health Education:

Currently more than 100,000 of child and adolescent mothers (9-18 y.o.) are giving births annually. WHO states that: "improved knowledge about sex and family planning will not only prevent early and unwanted pregnancies but also HIV infection...". However currently the Government of Thailand does not provide adequate knowledge about sexuality and reproductive health as part of the curriculum of compulsory education.

- 3.1. What specific measures, including legislation, programs, and budget allocations have been taken to insure sufficient knowledge of sexuality and reproductive health to be possessed by the children in Thailand?
- 3.2. Which avenues for reporting and seeking a remedy are currently available to a child facing a difficult situation in regards with sexuality and reproductive health?

## 4. Issues and questions on Children who are leaving school and are not completing compulsory secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.

There are over 100,000 students annually leaving education while transitioning from primary level to secondary school. Currently Thailand has no procedures and programs in place to prevent such a loss of potential.

- 4.1. What specific measures, including legislation, programs, and budget allocations have been taken to insure that children in Thailand do not drop out of their education and complete the compulsory secondary education?
- 4.2. Which avenues for reporting and seeking a remedy or assistance are currently available to a child facing a situation where they might be forced to stop their education without completing compulsory secondary level?



## 5. Issues and questions on Children educated in home school settings

The number of children enrolled in various home schooling settings is gradually increasing and more and more parents express their interest in their children being home schooled. Thailand's legislation does allow for this, however some further steps are required for home schooling to become a truly accessible option for an average Thai family. Current administration and core curriculum design procedures for Basic Education in Thailand in general and homeschooling in particular are currently very complicated and are not child-centered, and is not aligned with UNESCO's framework for action under the Education For All strategy. Further improvements in the procedural protocols and administration of home schooling are required, including instructional workshops to certify civil servants that are appointed to supervise and administer home schooling. Government policy should address and support a collaborative system of implementation that utilizes alternative education networks and other CSOs working in educational sector.

- 5.1. What specific measures, including legislation, programs, and budget allocations have been taken to insure that families in Thailand have an accessible option of home schooling?

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