

**Assessment Report of the Current Status and Needs in Improvement of Emergency
Kindergarten Management (EKM)
in An Giang province,
Mekong Delta, Vietnam**

1. Introduction

The initiative of operating Emergency Kindergartens (EKs) to care for young children during flood seasons has been considered as a successful model in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam by the flood management authorities in the past few years. It is because this model provides basic care, education, and safety for young children. The EKs have helped to considerably reduce the number of child drowning cases as well as provide some forms of education for these children. In addition, this model also contributes to help parents continue their work during flood time to earn a living for the whole family.

In order to comprehensively assess the effectiveness of this initiative for replication during future floods in the Mekong Delta, the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC) in collaboration with the Component 4 of the Mekong River Commission (MRC) Flood Management and Mitigation Program (FMMP) and the Flood Emergency Management Strengthening (FEMS) Project, with funding support from the Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH, in January 2008, has conducted an assessment of the EKs in An Giang province, Vietnam.

Objective: The objective of this assessment is to identify the gaps and needs in emergency kindergarten establishment, maintenance, and upgrading in conjunction with the existing provincial and district Flood and Storm Control Plans.

2. Key Findings

2.1. Child protection from water-related risks in flood-affected areas: general features

2.1.1. Common agreement on the need to pay special attention to protection of children from drowning, especially during flood season

Interviewed provincial, district, communal representatives, parents, community members all still have bad memories of the year 2000 flood which caused the death of hundred children. They also recognized that children still face danger and risk of drowning during the dry season due to the water omnipresence in the Mekong delta. They therefore all agreed that it would be necessary to pay special attention to protection of children from drowning, especially during flood season.

2.1.2. Protection of children: from rapid response to long term preparedness

“In 2000, the establishment of EKs was spontaneous. Since 2002, it becomes more organised”
(DOLISA)

Rapid response: temporary EK

The year 2000 flood was devastating, causing an extensive number of child drowning cases in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam. In addition to care and protection provided by families, in order to rapidly respond to the need of safer care and better protection for children, temporary EKs were established by the local authorities, using a private house borrowed from a volunteer owner or using public building such as health care centers, schools etc...

Long term preparedness: permanent EK

Since 2002, in the field of disaster risk reduction, more focus has been put on long-term solutions on the basis of the principle of living with the floods. New flood-proof residential areas have been built. Roads and village accesses have been improved to be used as dykes to protect other residential areas. The need for temporary EKs therefore has been reduced. Since then, the preferred solution is to establish and operate permanent EKs which aim at both providing education and protection for children.

“Preschools have been improved in flood-protected areas or newly built in flood proof areas and are operated as permanent EKs...” (PCFSC)

Long term trend

For long term, there is therefore a trend to plan for stronger integration of child care with education through development of more dual-use permanent Emergency Kindergartens.

In An Giang, the plan is to set up permanent 120 EKs in private houses and/or in public pre-school facilities. An Giang provincial authorities have assigned education authorities and CPFC to work together to ensure every new permanent EK is managed by skilful teacher(s). Due to the change in CPFC institutional status and organisational structure, the plan may be to pass the main responsibility for establishing and operating Emergency Kindergarten to education authorities in order to facilitate the integration process. At the same time, local authorities still emphasis the need to be prepared for opening temporary EKs in case of urgency, knowing that permanent EKs may not be of sufficient number to respond to the protection need.

2.2. Permanent EKs

2.2.1. Opening and building permanent EKs

In An Giang, the opening and building EKs are under the People Committee's direction and guidelines.

As per 2007, CPFC (Committee for Population, Families and Children) at provincial and district level is the coordinating body for the planning, establishing and operating organized care for children during flood season at their respective levels. The plan approved by the province's People Committee is to establish 120 permanent EKs. Since the provincial authorities' intention is to "*combine education and protection of children*" (PCFSC), education authorities are associated in the process of staff assignment and development to ensure every EK is operated by trained and skilful teacher(s).

"Due to education budget being limited thus not allowing generalising it [education combined with protection] quickly" (PCFSC), main funding sources for opening permanent EKs come from external donors. Funding can be used for building new EKs or for improving existing preschool facilities. The decision is made on the basis of donor's budget availability and local needs that are identified by the donors or by their local partners/representatives. Relationship that exists between the donors and the local communities also contributes to the decision making, especially in term of amount allocated and site selection. External donor usually requires local communities to contribute matching funds.

"Permanent EK is an appropriate model but we have no budget to do it" (DOET)... 2 EKs were built with support from Child welfare foundation and 4 with support from SAV" (CPFC)...

2.2.2. Operating permanent EKs

Operation period

Permanent EKs has clear mission of providing education, emergency care and protection for children. Therefore it is open over the year. All permanent EKs are day care center and thus they are close during evening and night time. In flood season, permanent EKs officially provide children with emergency care upon official decision of the local authorities.

Staffing

Each permanent EK has one preschool teacher taking care of children's education. The teacher usually is graduated from 12+2 education.

In flood season, if more children are sent to EKs, at least 1 local caretaker will be hired to assist the preschool teacher. They are mainly members of women association, youth union or local staff of CPFC, health care center who are selected on the basis of some criteria such as volunteering spirit, availability, child care skills. Caretakers receive training on children's recreational activities, food preparation and health care. They are likely to be mobilized every year.

Beneficiaries

In dry season, attendants of EKs are children from 3 to 6 years old. In flood season, permanent EKs are open to all children.

Care conditions

Generally pre-school facilities meet minimum standard in term of spaces but they may not have W.C and/or kitchen. During the dry season, the pre-schools have a clear mandate to provide children with education opportunities, following official education program and obligation.

In flood season, educational activities can be more flexible. More recreational activities can be then organized for children.

Operation cost

Costs for operating EKs include salary for caretakers and other functioning costs such as equipments, electricity, water, maintenance etc... As government staff, preschool teachers are paid by government salary budget.

A special budget for operating both permanent and temporary EKs in flood season is annually prepared by DOLISA/Department of Finance on the basis of the plan prepared by CPFC.

“The provincial People Committee assigns Dolisa to prepare a budget plan, on the basis of the level of the year 2000 flood and the estimated number of EKs to be operated. This annual budget approximately amounts to vnd 700.000.000/year ” (DOLISA)

For permanent EKs, this budget allows to cover the costs for transportation and to pay additional caretakers in order to have at least 2 caretakers for every 25 children taken care of. Government subsidies are also allocated to cover the costs for day meals for children from certified poor families (2000-3000 vnd/child/day). For other children, parents have to pay for day meals during children’s stay in EKs. Whenever possible, Women Union, Youth Union and other mass organizations and Red Cross provide support in terms of provision of transportation services. Parents’ contributions and/or external funding sources are also used for covering operational costs of permanent EKs during the flood season.

2.3. Temporary EK

2.3.1. Opening temporary EKs

In An Giang, as per 2007, CPFC (Committee for Population, Families and Children) at provincial and district level is the coordinating body for the planning, establishing and operating organized care for children during flood season at their respective levels. Participating bodies include DOLISA, Department of Finance, Women Union, Youth Union and other mass organizations, Red Cross, DOET, and Department of Health.

Each year, CPFC collects information from the communes and prepares a plan for opening temporary EKs. A budget plan is then developed by DOLISA together with Department of Finance. Based on provincial CPFC plan, district CPFC and communal authorities also

prepare their own plans. At communal level, sites for opening temporary EKs are selected before the flood season comes.

In flood season, president of People Committee at communal level is the one making decision on opening temporary EKs according to the plan on the basis of flood water level and local needs. *“Local authorities cannot start operating EKs by July if the flood only comes in October”* (DOLISA). In general, the opening of temporary EKs is triggered when flood water reaches level 2.

If the need is higher than the plan, more temporary EKs can be opened using additional reserve funding will be mobilised upon request.

“Every year, the commune prepares a plan for operating EKs. According to this plan, whenever flood water level reaches emergency level 2, EK will be operated... Temporary EK is usually set up where access is convenient for parents to drop their children” (PCFSC)

2.3.2. Operating temporary EKs

Operation period

Temporary EKs are open when necessary and only in flood season.

Staffing

There are generally at least 2 caretakers for each EKs. In An Giang, caretakers are hired by the local authorities. They are mainly members of women association, youth union or local staff of CPFC, health care center who are selected on the basis of some criteria such as volunteering spirit, availability, child care skills. Caretakers receive training on children’s recreational activities, food preparation and health care. They are likely to be mobilized every year. Locally hired caretakers usually receive support from preschool teachers.

Beneficiaries

Temporary EKs are open to all children.

Care conditions

Each temporary EK can accommodate 25-30 children. Generally facilities that are borrowed to be temporary Emergency Kindergarten should be flood proofed and meet some requirements in term of space and safety conditions. In many cases, additional improvements such as fencing are done with financial support from the government budget. Children are provided with food, some recreational and educational activities.

“Temporary EK is out of school system. It does not provide children with education but mainly safe protection during the time they parents are out to earn a living” (PCFSC)

Operation cost

DOLISA/Department of Finance is in charge of developing a budget provision on the basis of the plan prepared by CPFC. This budget of estimated vnd 700.000.000/year aims to cover operation costs for both permanent and temporary EKs during the flood time. Generally this budget allows to cover the costs for house rental if any, transportation and to have 2 caretakers for every 25 children taken care of. Government subsidies are also allocated to cover the costs for day meals for children from certified poor families (2000-3000 vnd/child/day). For other children, parents have to pay for day meals during children's stay in EKs. Women Union, Youth Union and other mass organizations and Red Cross provide support in terms of identification of caretakers and provision of transportation services.

2.3. Training for caretakers: needs and program

When the first temporary EKs were established in 2000, caretakers have met difficulties in managing EKs. Caretakers were selected on a voluntary basis. They therefore lacked skills on organizing group activities and educational activities for children. They usually have not sufficient understanding of nutrition and health care standard. Pre-school teachers were assumed to have necessary skills and capacities to provide children with appropriate care and education. However due to most of them being young, they lacked practical experience of addressing other children's needs, especially in the event of emergencies. They therefore have done the work of caretakers only on the basis of their own experiences. Main activities for children were to tell them stories, teach them to sing some children's songs and to distribute toys provided by humanitarian organizations to them without guiding them on how to play with.

Skills of preschool education managers and of EK caretakers have been improved thanks to different training activities which were organised under project of injury prevention funded by Unicef and under FEMS project (mainly in Chau Thanh and Tan Chau districts). Preschool managers were training on management skills. EK teachers and caretakers were trained on multi-grade teaching, toy making with local materials, on care for children, on ensuring children's best interest, on helping children be confident...

DOET participates in the preparation of training materials for caretakers, supervising teaching skills. Department of Health is responsible for the preparation of training materials for caretakers on health care related issues, organizing health check (through planning with communal health care center). PCFSC provides training on flood-related knowledge.

According to the informants, MOET has developed training materials for EK caretakers. ADPC project is supporting the revision of these training materials to make them more appropriate to the local situation by adding new contents such as food hygiene, nutritional education.

In addition to these focused training program, preschool teachers receive yearly training to refresh, upgrade their teaching and caring skills as part of training program organised by DOET at provincial and district levels. Women Union also organises training for its members and combines sometimes contents such as how to feed children and how to make toys for children.

2.4. Effectiveness

Organized Emergency Kindergartens with intervention of local authorities are considered useful for the following reasons:

- It frees parents from the obligation to stay at home, so that they can work to earn a living. This is very important for people living in Mekong delta because the flooding season is also the time where they have more opportunities to earn money from fishing or other types of work.
- It frees parents from the obligation to bring their children with them while they go fishing, thus avoiding to take children on the boat which is not a safe place.
- Children can stay in a safe place, taken care of by trained caretakers, meet other children, play and have food prepared by the caretakers. Children from poor families also benefit from free meals thanks to the financial support from the government.

However it is noted that the temporary Emergency Kindergartens were established mainly to provide supervised care for children during flood times, not to educate children. It is due to the lack of the facilities, teaching aid, teachers, and most importantly the mandate to maintain education activity. It totally depends on the initiative and motivation of each EK management team, teachers, and local leaders to make educational activities as mandatory.

The caretakers are community volunteers and were not officially trained to take care of children. In addition, most of the Emergency Kindergartens use private houses as the caring facilities. The number of children in each EK is usually over the capacity of the physical facility due to the high need of local households. Children do not have a stimulating living and educational environment. In some cases, the houses do not meet the minimum safety.

It is highly recognized that permanent Emergency Kindergarten is an advanced form of organized care for children during dry and flood seasons because:

- It is managed by the Education Authorities, thus offering a warranty of quality care
- It helps educate parents on the need to prepare for the children's future and develop pre-school education for children which is a high concern of both parents and authorities
- It facilitates educational activities for children during the time they stay in the Emergency Kindergartens. Children are taken care of by trained caretakers during the whole school year, so including flood season. Parents therefore can work to earn a living. They are still with their parents during the night time. Education materials and teaching methodologies are those that are used formal education system. Caretakers assimilated teachers are supervised by education authorities. Children therefore can have access to pre-school education so that they are better prepared for their official enrolment in primary education system. Since the permanent EK operates during the school year, it is ready to be ready at any time to be operated as Emergency Kindergarten if necessary in flood season.
- It can help integrate disaster risk reduction into very early stage of children's education

2.5. Establishing and operating Emergency Kindergartens: gaps, challenges and needs

2.5.1. Gaps

Information dissemination on policy, guidelines relating to Emergency Kindergarten's operation

When interviewing the key informants in An Giang, they mentioned about the decision of the Party, the People's Councils, and the People's Committees to ensure the safety for children during the flood season and the emergency Emergency Kindergarten is one of the measures. However the assessment team was not able to collect written documents for reference on guidelines and policies relating to the opening, operation, management, budget allocation and reimbursement, child selection, caretaker selection and training etc... Between agencies, information is usually not consistent in term of policy guidelines, budget allocation. It was also noted that at higher level, the informants are more aware of these policies and regulations than at lower level where the commune leaders and community members do not know exactly what policies exist and how they can access to the government supports. In An Giang province for example, when interviewed, the chairman of the PC of the Phu Loc commune did not know exactly neither the budget allocation modalities and the policy for reimbursement of expenses for emergency Emergency Kindergartens as stimulated in policy of the Provincial Department of Labor, Invalids, and Social Affairs, nor how much financial support to caretakers and children they can get from the state budget.

Agencies such as CFSC, CPFC and DOET at provincial level who play the role of supervision often do not have updated information from other participating agencies and from the local level. Between different levels, once agencies at the communal level complete data and information collection on the needs to establish Emergency Kindergartens according to instructions from the higher level, they usually send their report to district level line manager. In some cases, the information flows stop there, resulting in lack of information at provincial level.

Gaps in planning and opening EKs

- Lack of clear information on provincial plan to shift from private residence based permanent EKs to public preschool based EKs.

It is recognised that permanent EKs will be in better conditions if they are housed together with flood proof public preschool facilities. However in provincial and district plan, there is no information, no plan on the development of flood proof public preschool facilities.

- Lack of clear mechanism to involve community members, including children in planning

Community participation in implementing emergency Emergency Kindergartens is considered key factor for the success of this initiative. Their contribution is made through them making their houses available to use as temporary Emergency Kindergartens during the flood season, mobilizing parents to send children to safe places, providing food, mobilizing additional resources (in-kind and labor). However it is not clear how community members, including

children participate in planning process and in making decision to open, operate and maintain these EKs. There seems to be no systematic mechanism to involve them in these processes. The plan for disaster risk reduction in general and for establishing EKs has no indication on how things should be done. While the roles of different agencies are mentioned, there is no information on what role community members and children can play and how they can take that role. Children's participation in planning and making decision is not yet admitted everywhere.

- Funding issue

It is a wish of every communal authorities and communities to have permanent EKs available in order to be less dependant while they need to open EKs in flood season. However there is a gap between the need of permanent EKs and the financial capacity to meet the need.

Due to its limited budget, Government encourages investment from private and NGO sectors within their socio-economic development program or on humanitarian aid basis. There is therefore a need to seek for and obtain additional funding. The problem is that there is few donors who are positioned in both field of disaster risk reduction and education services. Most of them are interested in one or another, thus making it difficult to justify a request for funding a multi-purposes infrastructure. Sometimes funding from external donor agencies is available but requires matching funds.

Since 2002, due to the flood level being low, there was not high demand for establishing temporary EKs. So there is no evidence on gap between the level of fund allocation and financial needs. It was estimated by informants that only 1/3 of the budget that was planned for operating EKs in flood seasons was spent each year since 2002. However the remaining 2/3 cannot be used for building more permanent EKs.

Concerning temporary EKs, budget allocation for opening and operating EKs also depends on the number of children who need to be taken care of. According to informants at communal level, it was not said but in practice a minimum number of children is required to open and operate an EK. However due to the provincial government policy providing only children from certified poor families with financial support to cover meal costs, families who are just above the poverty line have to pay if they want to send their children to EKs. Due to many of them not being able to afford that, the number of children may be less than required, thus causing EK not to be open.

Gaps in training

- Training of caretakers

There was only a little number of training opportunities that have focused on building capacity for EK caretakers. According to participants in training activities, training sessions were quite short. Most of them were trained only once and have not been offered any refreshing training yet. Up to now, trainings mainly target permanent EK teachers. Training initiatives were not extended to all communes and to all caretakers yet.

We lack specialised training opportunities that can provide us with more knowledge on flood"
(Tan Chau district DOET)

Most of caretakers are from mass organizations. Although they have received training on care for children, these trainings were usually short-term trainings. Since education is becoming more and more a key component in daily operation of Emergency Kindergartens, especially with the development of dual-use permanent Emergency Kindergartens, the lack of qualification of caretakers will be a problem. Indeed, beginning of 2008, MOET has issued new regulations on professional qualification required for teaching job. According to this new regulation, minimum professional qualification should be 12+2 (12-year general education + 2-year specialized teacher training). Many existing caretakers therefore will not meet the requirement and in principle they will not be allowed to teach children. Post training evaluation and/or training need assessment was not done in order to assess caretakers' skills so as to propose refreshing and/or upgrading training plan for those who want to continue working in the future.

Awareness raising on disaster risk reduction is not yet systematically organized for EK caretakers. Experiences of teachers in emergency cares are still lacking. In term of care quality, some teachers are still young and have no children. They may be good at teaching skills but may lack experiences on giving care for children of young age

- Awareness raising for children's parents

How to mobilize children from the poorest families who live in the most vulnerable areas to Emergency Kindergartens, to convince parents on the need to send children to a Emergency Kindergarten are the greatest concern and the biggest challenge for the local authorities, staff and mass organizations. They usually faced parents' reluctance attitude due to the constraints in term of distance to the Emergency Kindergartens, of lack of confidence on caretakers, of time they need to spend for transportation and due to the need to financially contribute to the operation costs of these centers.. These parents do not want to spend their time to send and pick up their children from the Emergency Kindergartens.

After having experienced the very bad year 2000 flood and good benefit of Emergency Kindergartens set up in 2001, parents have started to change their mind. However there are still parents who prefer keeping children with them at home or taking them to work.

In contrary, it was said that in some cases, parents have sent their children to EKs, not to have time to work but to go playing cards.

- Funding for training

In term of financing, most of training sessions for EK caretakers were mainly sponsored by the INGOs and donors. There is no state budget allocated for training activities.

Gaps in operation

Many gaps can be observed in operation:

- Lack of safety fencing

Most EKs in operation still need to be further improved. As per today, many EKs still have not any fencing which is one of the most needed safety requirements to protect children in flood season. ADPC is helping improving security fencing in EKs

- Lack of recreational equipments

In term of recreational activities, there is a critical lack of playgrounds, toys and recreational materials although caretakers try to make some toys by themselves with locally found materials.

“If we want to provide children with more information on floods and on what they need to do in flood season, we need more illustrated documents” (district DOET)

- Difficulties in ensuring education in EKs

One of the objectives of permanent EKs is to provide children with quality educational activities. However teachers still have to deal with the lack of teaching and learning materials. In flood season, if there is urgent need to organize emergency care for children, teachers have to take care of an increasing number of children while in principle they have to ensure standard preschool education program implemented.

Lack of space also causes difficulties for operation. Indeed, in flood season, EKs are open to children of all ages. It becomes then very difficult to organize activities for children

- Impossibility to maintain temporary EK in operation for long periods

Temporary EK functions only during the flood time. Not all people who have a safe house want to have children at their place. So there may be no possibility to establish a temporary Emergency Kindergarten where there is a need. Houses’ owners may not want to lend their house every year. It is therefore necessary to change the place from one year to another.

- Change in caretaking staff

Low salaries of caretaking staff is a challenge that may result in caretakers resigning from the work or not willing to do the same work again. There will be then a need for start over again the training process, involving time and money.

- Access of children from poor families or from families just above the poverty line.

The transformation into public pre-school facilities may result in limited access to education of some groups of children, especially those from the families who are positioned just above the poverty line, thus reducing the rate of children attending preschool EK. To send their children to public pre-school, parents have to pay for education fees. Parents also have to pay higher costs for food as food for children should meet nutritional standard, especially when the children stay for the whole day. Since regular pre-school time is half day, parents also have to pay extra fees for extra working time of the teachers. Although children from certified poor families can benefit from fee exemption as per government policy statements, some parents cannot afford costs for food and teachers’ extra working time. In case of the families who are just above the poverty line, they face difficulties to afford both education fees and cannot get any fee exemption and cannot afford to send their children to the pre-school.

2.5.2. Needs

Need for continuous efforts to develop permanent EKs while taking into account progresses of flood proof and flood protected residential areas

Flood remains one of the main causes of pre-school and primary school aged children's drowning in previous year. There is therefore an evident need to continuously implement measures to protect children in flood season. In addition, due to the omnipresence of water in the Mekong delta, children also drown in dry season. The need to protect children is then also very important. Since An Giang province has considerably invested in building dyke system to protect residential areas, the need for temporary EKs therefore may be reduced in many places. However more and more, education is considered a solution to protect children from drowning and other effects of the flood. Indeed in pre-schools and schools, children are supervised, provided care for and can learn about how to identify dangers and protect themselves from that. Government therefore pays special attention to linking disaster preparedness and education. However, most pre-school facilities built before the year 2000 flood are not flood-proofed. Almost none of these pre-school facilities therefore can be considered safe for children in flood season. On the other hand, existing Emergency Kindergartens, including newly built ones are not all properly equipped with teaching materials, safety fencing, and playgrounds... There is therefore a need for, on one hand, improving wherever possible existing education facilities to meet the flood proofing requirement to make them ready for becoming EKs in flood season and, on the other hand, building new Emergency Kindergarten taking into account the education purposes.

Need for better planning and information sharing

Children's protection in flood prone areas involves a multitude of stakeholders and different levels of decision making. Due to the need for continuous efforts to develop EKs to ensure children are protected and due to limited financial resources, it is important, as expressed by local stakeholders, to prioritize and progressively develop EKs. Therefore there is a need for good planning to ensure EKs are developed where the demand is and to ensure relevant stakeholders and levels of decision making are involved. In order to do good planning, it is important that information sharing is improved because planning cannot be pertinent without relevant information on policies, on resource availabilities, on local needs and requirements.

Need for securing external funding

Funding is always a critical issue. Government has called for socialization, i.e responsibilities sharing between government and other social stakeholders. It is then expected that the development of EKs does not rely only on government budget but that public pre-school facilities are also built or improved with external donors' support together with contributions of the local authorities and communities, then handed over to education authorities who are responsible for providing teachers, teaching facilities and teaching aids and functioning costs. There is therefore a need for seeking and securing external funding.

The problem also is that only few donors are positioned in both fields of disaster risk reduction and education services. Most of them are interested in one or another, thus making it difficult to justify a request for funding a multi-purposes infrastructure. It is really true when it is about convincing a donor with strong focus on disaster risk reduction to fund the

construction of an infrastructure that is used during 10 months of a year for education purposes. There is a need to make any proposal to external funding more convincing to secure funding

Need for training and stabilizing caretaking staff

When an EK goes into operation, it is a critical issue to ensure EK is operated by skillful caretakers. In the case of permanent EKs, caretakers will be likely preschool trained teachers and locally hired assistants. It is indisputable that preschool teachers have necessary and better skills to provide children with education than any other caretaker. However since the EK is likely to be open to more children and to children of different age groups in flood situation, there is a need for preschool teachers to be prepared by training on how to manage the EK during that time, how to play other roles than educative ones. For locally hired assistants, their roles are certainly more than just providing teachers with assistance. They therefore need to be trained on how to participate in organizing activities for quite a big group of children and how to provide them with care and protection.

Since training is an investment on human resource, it is necessary to keep caretakers motivated and willing to take their roles and responsibilities. It may help avoid facing the issue of frequent staff change and ensure that the available human resource is used in the most valuable way and for a long period.

Need for developing minimum construction and operation standards for EKs

EK should be a place where children are provided with education opportunities and with protection from water-related risks. EK is therefore neither a simple preschool facility nor a simple emergency child care center. Thus EK should be designed, arranged and operated in a way that responds to education and safety needs. As per today, there is any standardized requirement for EK yet. In many cases, EK respond only to education needs. There is therefore a need for developing minimum construction and operation standard for EKs.

3. Recommendations

From the strategic perspective, considering the need to protect children from water-related risks, the need to facilitate access to education for children, multi-purposes Emergency Kindergarten is the most effective model. It is recommended that EK development is integrated into national DDR strategies.

From operational perspective, practical improvements should be done to address gaps and needs in terms of planning, opening and operating EKs.

In term of planning, it is recommended that:

- mechanisms are set to ensure two way communication and information sharing between stakeholders from different agencies and from different levels.

- careful survey is carried out at communal level to identify local needs of EKs and capacities to contribute. HCVA seems to be a good way to do in order to involve community members, including children in the process.
- information from the communal level is channelled up to the provincial level and used as input for overall provincial plan for establishing and operating EKs that is used as basis for budgeting
- overall provincial plan and budget are developed with as much details as possible and are shared with all stakeholders, including local communities and external donor agencies or individuals for fund raising purposes.
- proposals for external funding make disaster risk reduction features or education purpose more visible according to the targeted donors and provide relevant information on the benefices of multi-purpose EKs.
- Minimum construction and operation standards for EKs are developed and serve as basis for planning taking into account available resources
- Cooperation models for establishing permanent EKs are further developed. *“For example, local authorities provide land in flood proof or flood protected areas, mass organisations/local authorities raise funds from external donors and education authorities provides teachers”* (PCFSC).

In term of training, it is recommended that:

- Training should not be one shoot activity
- More training activities are organized both in term of refreshing and providing new knowledge for a wider group of caretakers, including those who are part-time involved in EK’s operation such as locally hired assistants for permanent EKs and locally hired caretakers for temporary EKs
- Post training evaluation is carried out in order to assess caretakers’ skills so as to propose an upgrading training plan for those who want to continue working in the future.
- Training of caretakers should also include knowledge and skills on disaster risk reduction, care for children in emergencies and skills to work with big group of children
- Training activities are organized for children for children on recognizing and avoiding hazards, dangers and for community members on education and disaster risk reduction linkage
- Costs for training are included in budget plan for development of EKs

In term of operation, it is recommended that:

- improvements are made to equip existing EKs with safety fencing
- minimum operation standards for EK include necessary equipments and teaching, learning and playing materials. Costs for equipments and materials should be included in the budget plan for development of EKs.
- Minimum operation standards set expectation in term of education offer during flood period, taking into account the increased number of children attending EKs and the diversity of their ages
- Minimum construction standard is available in term of design and arrangement to ensure sufficient spaces are available for EKs to function with an increased number of children attending during flood time
- Caretaking staff, especially those who are locally hired for short term period, get relevant compensation so that they are willing to do the work again and again.

- Policies on support to children attending EKs are made available to all stakeholders, including parents. Government support may have to go to children from certified poor families as required but external support may be used to support other children.

As an international organization, ADPC can play an active role in the process of development of EKs. It is recommended that:

- ADPC advocates for EKs towards international donor communities
- ADPC advocates for community members and children's participation in the development of EKs
- ADPC collaborates with local and international partners to come up with proposal on minimum construction and operation standards for EK
- ADPC continues to support training initiatives for children, parents, caretakers, community members and authorities
- ADPC supports the improvement of existing EKs to meet safety and education needs
- ADPC supports the construction of new EKs