

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

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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 Dong Thap 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

Rapid response: temporary EK

The year 2000 flood was devastating, causing an extensive number of child drowning cases in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam. Most of these children drowned at home and during day time, especially in the afternoon where the mother has to do other house work and cannot look after them carefully. Majority of them are under 6 years olds. 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... The first initiative in Dong Thap was implemented in Tam Nong district.

Long term preparedness: permanent EK

A new model of organized care has been developed since 2001 in Dong Thap province. It is the dual-use model of Emergency Kindergarten set up in private houses which is used as regular kindergartens during dry season and as Emergency Kindergarten during flood season. According to interviewed informants, the establishment of emergency EK in private houses in 2000 and 2001 had showed great benefits in terms of protection of children and of support to parents. Parents therefore came up with the request to the local authorities to transforming these EKs into day care centers and keep continuing to operate them, providing opportunities for parents to have their children taken care of in safe place for the whole day so that parents can work and children can be educated to be prepared for the primary school. The request was conveyed to the provincial authorities who found it relevant taking into account the principle of living with the floods, the pre-school education need, the socialization policy and the possibility to have ready and available facilities for use whenever necessary as Emergency Kindergartens in flood season. Provincial authorities then approved it and assigned the education authorities to be in charge of the implementation in coordination with their branches at district and communal levels. This form of care is quite specific to Dong Thap province.

In Dong Thap, today plan is to maintain existing permanent EKs in private houses and wherever possible, to transfer them into new flood-proof public pre-school facilities that will be progressively built according to funding availability.

“In order to solve difficulties linked to the use of private houses and also to ensure equal access to education for children, the province is implementing a project to build solid schools, especially where flood proof residential areas are” (Dong Thap DOET).

Long term trend

Establishing organized care for children in flood-affected areas and during flood season is a coordinated planning process between different agencies and different levels under the direction of the vice-president or president of the people committee at all level and under the supervision of the SFSC unit who is as advisor to the People Committee on disaster response and preparedness matter. A general disaster preparedness plan is prepared every year at all

levels. Each organization also prepares its own plan, taking into account the information provided in the general plan.

For long term, there is a trend to plan for stronger integration of child care with education through development of more permanent Emergency Kindergartens – public pre-schools.

Therefore in Dong Thap, provincial authorities have assigned DOET to be responsible for establishing and operating Emergency Kindergarten 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 Dong Thap, the opening and building EKs are under the People Committee’ s direction and guidelines with PCFSC as main advisory and overall management body. Education Authority is assigned to be focal point and other agencies act as collaborating agencies. Each year, a plan is prepared at different level, reviewing existing number of EKs in operation and budget incurred as well as foreseeing the number of temporary EKs that may need to be open in flood season and the related costs. In 2008 for example, according to the draft plan of PCFSC, the plan is:

“to keep 78 existing permanent EKs in operation to provide care for 2000 children and to open 70 temporary EKs to care for 1400 more children during high flood time...”

<i>EK</i>	
<i>Number of existing EKs</i>	<i>78</i>
<i>Number of children being cared for</i>	<i>2000</i>
<i>Budget</i>	<i>3,120,000,000 VND</i>
<i>Number of EKs to be eventually open</i>	<i>70</i>
<i>Number of children to be cared for</i>	<i>1400</i>
<i>Budget</i>	<i>560,000,000 VND</i>

(draft PCFSC Plan for 2008)

Permanent EKs are part of the pre-school system, thus they are under education authorities’ overall management. Main costs are covered by education budget. In flood season, additional funding may be allocated if justified. They figure in the disaster response and preparedness plan of the commune as a potential site to provide organised care for children.

There are two main funding sources for opening permanent EKs:

DOET budget

External budget

DOET’s budget is mainly used to keep private residences-based permanent EKs in operation according to the provincial disaster preparedness annual plan. In 2007, the number of EKs that were maintained in 2007 was 78.

“In 2007, there were 78 EKs open. These EKs are those which operate over the year... In 2007, flood level was low so there was no need to open more EKs” (PCFSC)

Generally 80% of the budget that one communal pre-school receives from the government is used for paying teacher’s salaries and 20% is used as overall operational budget. The pre-school therefore has to balance its operational expenditures in order to allocate part of these 20% of the operational budget for covering the costs for operation of EKs, mainly including salaries of the main teacher/caretaker (VND 600,000/person/month¹) and of the assistant (VND 480,000/person/month²)

The use of external funding sources is more flexible. Therefore funding can be used for building new EKs or for improving existing public 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. In Dong Thap, WU has played an active role in seeking external funding opportunities for building new permanent EKs and in coordinating with DOET to ensure sustainable implementation.

“Education authorities seem to invest more on building new primary school... We mobilise funding from donors for building permanent EKs. Then we coordinate with education authorities for site selection and design. Once built, the EK is under the overall management of the communal people committee and operated by education... We have just completed 2 room EK in Tan Hue commune and 1 room EK in Thanh Binh town ” (Dong Thap WU)

Being involved in the establishment and the operation of Emergency Kindergartens. Women Union at provincial level gives instruction to its local branches to participate in establishing and operating EKs as part of their responsibilities. CPFC also plays other roles like advising on site selection and caretaker selection, mobilising parents to send their children to EKs, making monitoring visits to EKs, mobilising external funding sources...

“One month before the flood season, PCPFC usually liaises with PCFSC to get flood forecast information. PCPFC then gives instructions to DCPFC to advise District People Committee to request communal authorities to carry out a survey on situation of EKs, on local needs for child protection in flood season and on local capacities (available sites, human resources).

At district level, coordination between organizations is sometimes formalized by a joint agreement on an action plan during flooding periods. In Thanh Binh district for example, district DOET and district CPFC sign every year a joint agreement on protection of children during the flood season. In 2006, this joint agreement was validated for the period from August 15th, 2006 till November 30th, 2006. It was said in the agreement that:

“District CPFC and District DOET collaborate to select caretakers to participate in training on child protection in flood season for 18 EKs in order to provide care for children in high risk areas...” (Joint agreement on protection of children during flood season, 2006, District CPFC – District DOET)

¹ As per 2007

² As per 2007

Communal level authorities and agencies are responsible for site and caretakers selection, implementation of plan and for organization of transportation. Generally a plan is prepared in advance, indicating the number of current available private house based day care centers or other facilities that can be used as emergency Emergency Kindergartens, and the number of temporary emergency Emergency Kindergartens that need to be opened in flood season. This plan serves as basis for budgeting.

The concrete decision to operate an Emergency Kindergarten in flood season is made by the commune people committee's chairman on the basis of

1. information on the flood level provided by the weather forecast services and the flood and storm control services
2. advises from pre-school management after assessment of the needs of local people/children in consultation and coordination with communal staff of CPFC, mass organizations and with other bodies
3. budget conditions.

2.2.2. Operating permanent EKs

Operation period

EKs has clear double mission of providing education, emergency care and protection for children. Therefore it is open over the year. All EKs are day care center and thus they are close during evening and night time.

Staffing

Actually EKs are under management of education authorities but caretakers are not government staff. They are hired on contractual basis. Contract is of one year duration and renewable depending on budget availability. In Dong Thap, caretakers usually include an assimilated pre-school teacher³ who is selected by the pre-school management and trained to provide education and care for children and an assistant who is responsible for food preparation and provide the pre-school teacher or assimilated with support. They are employed on a yearly contractual basis. In 2000, 2001, they were usually voluntary women who usually were members of the Women's Union and who had experiences in caring for their children or grandchildren. In later years, recognizing the important role of these volunteers, the education sector and some INGOs have conducted some basic training for them during or before the flood seasons. These trainings cover the basic care for young children, nutrition, first aid, child rights, educational development activities, and so on⁴. In flood season, if necessary, other primary schools teachers can be mobilized and volunteered to participate in caring for children in the Emergency Kindergarten. However, in recent years, due to the most schools now are located in the safe areas and elevated (2 stories buildings),

³ In flood season, a pre-school teacher can be mobilized if the pre-school is closed due to the flood

⁴ This is one of the most potential areas for the future supports from the donor communities to provide regular and continued training if the EK initiative will be continued as a solution for child safety and care during flood time.

primary school teachers are no longer available to work full-time at these Emergency Kindergartens. They only can participate part of their free time after school hours and act as supervisor or consultant to the temporary caretakers.

Beneficiaries

In dry season, attendants of permanent EKs are children 2 years old and older. They must stay for the whole day during the dry season. In flood season, EKs are open to all children.

Care conditions

Generally houses that are borrowed to be EKs 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. Education is part of main children's stay purposes, especially in dry season. Staying at EKs, children are provided with some recreational and educational activities. However, private houses cannot provide appropriate conditions for teaching and learning.

Generally food is prepared by the parents who bring food to the Emergency Kindergartens either in the morning when they take children there or at an agreed time.

“Children staying in EKs are mainly children from poor families. Their parent even cannot pay for their lunch. Thus education authorities have proposed a flexible solution allowing parents to prepare a lunch box for their children or take children home during lunch time...”

In flood season, depending on the flood level, more children can attend. In flood season, educational activities can be more flexible. More recreational activities can be then organized for children.

Cost

Costs for operating EKs include salary for caretakers and other functioning costs such as equipments, electricity, water, maintenance etc... In Dong Thap, DOET at provincial level is responsible for overall planning and operational implementation of organized care for children. The budget for establishing and functioning Emergency Kindergarten comes from operational budget that is allocated by the government to education sector. In this form of care, parents do not have to pay for any education fees which are all covered by education budget. They do not have to provide children with food as required by nutritional standard. They only have to prepare food with what is available and contribute for some minor operational costs such as drinking water.

2.3. Temporary EK

2.3.1. Opening temporary EKs

The need to be prepared for opening temporary EKs in case of urgency is always recognized by the authorities at all level. Therefore in the general disaster preparedness plan prepared every year at all levels, there is always a section relating to protection of children and to

opening EKs. In Dong Thap, opening temporary EK is under overall management of PCFSC and implemented by education authorities.

“actually we have to open temporary EKs in private residences because there is not enough preschool facilities for everybody due to preschool facilities being only sited in main locations... before 2001, temporary EKs were opened and managed by Youth Union. Opening temporary EKs is now under the overall responsibility of PCFSC and implemented by education authorities in coordination with other agencies...” (PCFSC)

The concrete decision to open the Emergency Kindergartens is made by the commune people committee’s chairman. The decision to open an Emergency Kindergarten is made on the basis of

- information on the flood level provided by the weather forecast services and the flood and storm control services
- needs of the local people/children that are identified through consultation made by communal staff of CPFC, education in coordination with other bodies
- infrastructure and budget conditions.

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 temporary EKs. 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.

Beneficiaries

Temporary EKs are open to all children. 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.

“Houses used for temporary EK should be large and meet some requirements... The main purpose of temporary EKs is to keep them safe, not to provide them with education due to children being from different age groups...”

Cost

Caretakers' salaries and operation costs are covered by the education operational budget.

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.

In 2003, with support from UNICEF, one training course was organised for EK caretakers in Tam Nong and Dong Thap districts on skills to provide children with health care. A group of 20 EK caretakers were provided with opportunities to attend a 12-month training provided by Dong Thap Teacher Training University

Since ADPC is implementing its project in Thanh Binh and Tan Hong districts of Dong Thap province, ADPC has paid attention to this issue by including capacity building on EKs' management as an integrated component of its current FEMS projects. ADPC has organised in July-August 2006 one training/project district for EK caretakers. About 40 participants per district have attended this training.

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.

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 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 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

“Since children were mobilised to EKs in flood season, we could observe an increasing rate of children attending preschool education” (Dong Thap DOET)

- 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 center 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

Gaps in planning and opening EKs

- Lack of flexibility in planning

The planning process seems to follow a top-down approach. A general plan is first prepared by PCFSC on behalf of the provincial People Committee. The plan is then sent to different agencies and levels for information which should be used as guidelines for more detailed plans. However the general already set the number of EKs and the budget, thus giving very little flexibility to agencies and levels.

- 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.

- Weak information sharing on plan and results

As said, opening and operating EKs require collaboration between different agencies. It was said that Dong Thap province has assigned education authorities the main responsibility for establishing and operating Emergency Kindergarten in order to facilitate the integration process of emergency child care and education. However Pcfsc does not have information on Doet's plan to set up EKs and results. Between agencies, information is not always consistent in term of policy guidelines, budget allocation, results of establishing, maintaining EKs. 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.

- 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.

Funding from education budget is limited and it is not possible for the education authorities to allocate large government financial resources to build new pre-school facilities since investment priorities go to primary and high school infrastructures.

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.

Regarding temporary EKs, 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. However, since funding comes from education operational budget, this is seen as a gap because this budget represents only 20% of education budget and is used for many different purposes.

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

Most of caretakers are from mass organizations. Although they have received training on care for children, these trainings were usually sort-term trainings (excepting the training supported by UNICEF for Dong Thap district's caretakers). 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.

- 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

Since most of EK are still housed in private residences, 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.

- Lack of sanitation

In 2 visited EKs, there is no washroom for children who have to go outside.

- 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.

- 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.

“Our district needs more EKs but we encounter difficulties due to limited funding resources... We can mobilise private residences but most of them can be used only during the flood season. We cannot invest in improving private residences...”

- 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

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.

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

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