VIETNAM

"Say No to Truancy"

Chu Duc Yen, Nguyen Thi Hanh, Ho Thi Nhat Oanh

1. Frame of reference

Vietnam is the second country in the world and the first in Asia to ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

The Convention represents 8 basic contents (using the 4-3-1 formula) as follows:

Four groups of Rights:

- + The Right to survival.
- + The Right to be protected.
- + The Right to development.
- + The Right to participate.

The division of these four groups of rights is just relatively meaningful; in reality, these rights groups have close and intimate relation with each other.



Three principles

+ The International Convention stipulates children as the people under 18 years of age.

+ All the rights and obligations stated in the Convention will be applied equally to all children without any discrimination.

+ All activities are done for the best interests of children.

A process

+ The implementation of the Rights of the Child is a process of coordinating multiple activities of intervention and support, and everyone including children has the responsibility to assist the State to implement and monitor the implementation process of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Vietnam has put forth a number of decrees, decisions, organized many programs and projects to realize the children's rights with the aim for the best interest for children such as Government Decree No. 36/2005 / ND - CP dated 17 March 2005 detailing the implementation of a number of articles of the Law on Protection, Care and Education of Children.

Through 20 years of implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, a number of achievements have been obtained as follows:



- The protection of children is enhanced towards ensuring more adequate rights than the basic rights and needs of children; creating equal environment for all children; facilitating conditions for education, recreation for children, through which the rights of the children are better ensured; more children with special circumstances are taken care of; children under the age of 6 are medically examined and treated free of charge.

Baseline

The Hoang Dieu Junior High School is located in the commune of Dak Rla, DakMil district, DakNong Province. The school was established on 16 July 2001. At first, the school was located in the Village 3 of Dak Rla commune, but it moved to its current place in Village 5 in February 2008.

The Dak Rla commune is located in the northeast of Dak Mil district, with an area of 9.279 ha, inhabited by 2,120 households, including 9,074 people. The commune is consisted of 12 villages. There are 12 different ethnic groups with 4,016

people living together in the commune (Kinh (Vietnamese), Tay, Nung, Muong, Man, San Diu, M'Nong, Dao, San Chi, Thai, Thanh, Cao Lan). The population density averages 95 per square kilometer. The traffic system of the commune includes a national route number 14A with a length of 7 km, the remaining are inter-communal roads, inter-village and most of them are dirt



roads. Although located in a place with a lot of difficulties, the size of classes and the number of pupils are increasing with every passing day.



The families of most school pupils are in economic difficulties, and the number of ethnic minority pupils account for nearly 1/3 of the total school pupils. The quality of school pupils is increasing gradually: every year the school sends its outstanding pupils to contests at district and province levels and they often achieve high results. The numbers of pupils have increased rapidly from 06 to 23 classes up to now. There are 04 blocks of grades, namely:

Block No	Grade	Number of classes	Total pupils	Female	Ethnic	Female Ethnic	Pupil dropout
1	6	7	238	100	101	45	3
2	7	6	201	105	60	41	5
3	8	6	186	97	55	26	6
4	9	4	154	77	48	23	9
	Total	23	779	379	264	135	23

School year 2010-2011:

School year 2011 – 2012:

Block No	Grade	Number of classes	Total pupils	Female	Ethnic	Female Ethnic	Pupil dropout
1	6	7	253	100	101	45	3
2	7	6	226	105	65	41	4
3	8	5	195	97	55	26	4
4	9	5	184	75	48	25	5
	Total	23	784	377	269	137	16

Despite an increase in number of pupils and the fact that most of them are studious, there are some pupils who refuse to take lessons, prefer playing internet games to learning, and their families do not pay attention to them. As a consequence, the children's dropout rate of the first semester of 2010 - 2011 was 23/779 = 2.95%. and of the school year 2011-2012 was 2.04%.

Although the school management has held regular discussions on the issue of "Truancy" and used various measures in coordination with local authorities, parents, head teachers, school board members to encourage them to attend school, the rate of truancy among the school children is still high.

2. Purpose

We, as change agents of batch 13, decided to choose the project title as "Say No to Truancy" to be executed at Hoang Dieu Junior High School.

"Say No to Truancy" – aims at reducing maximum rate of pupils leaving classes (or study periods) in order to maintain the number of pupils for all the school subjects.

Classes are encouraged to emulate with each other to have good learning hours, good learning days, good learning weeks and months.

The school is friendly, and the pupils are positive learners with lesser hours playing truant.

2.1 Outcome²

Mid-term effects/results:

- To raise the awareness on child rights for teachers, students and parents through the integration of teaching hours and distribution of leaflets.
- To strengthen the relationship and roles among the three groups of families, schools and pupils.
- To raise the awareness about the role and duties of pupils within and outside the classroom.
- To guide teachers in creating extracurricular activities to attract the pupils' active learning instead of playing truant.
- To integrate the issues of rights and responsibilities of children into teaching and learning, as well as into school management.
- To improve the quality of education in schools, to pilot a school-friendly model with positive pupils (launched by the Ministry of Education and Training throughout the country)
- To empower the children and ensure the quality of life in the future.

2.2 Output³

Short term effects/results with indicators

- The rate of truancy among the pupils is reduced;
- The involvement of children in schools is improved;
- The teachers' and parents' awareness of the child rights and their duties are enhanced;
- The participation of teachers, parents and pupils in the school's extracurricular activities by means of providing them with child rights-related documents is strengthened;

² See Annex 1 for Project Plan

³ See Annex 1 for Project Plan

- The teachers' better understanding of the children's rights and their participation will meet the needs and activities of children in schools;
- The involvement of parents in the school and their responsibilities for children while at school are strengthened.

3. Activities

a. Identify tasks

Our major objectives and tasks are to improve the learning quality and to raise awareness about the child rights in schools by organizing classes for exchanging and discussing the children's rights, and providing CRC-related documents with the participation of teachers, parents and pupils.

b. Target groups

- The pupils of grades 8C, 8D, 8E (school year 2010 2011)
- The pupils of grades 6 (school year 2011 2012)
- The subject teacher and the head teacher
- · The school board
- The parents of classes 8C, 8D, 8E, 6A, 6B, 6C, 6D, 6E, 6G, 6H.

c. Methodology

Organize meetings (for local government representatives, school management board, teachers, parents, pupils and representatives of mass unions).

 - Hold open discussions (for local government representatives, school management board, teachers, parents, pupils and representatives of mass unions);



- Provide documents about the child rights based on various activities of the team;
- - Interview the subjects concerned;
- - Distribute questionnaires to teachers and parents;
- - Group activities;
- - Play-acting and simulation are used as a method for the pupils to impart child rights among their peer groups.

d. Data collection

The data was collected through different ways and the results were analyzed by type.

- Exchange discussions with the school management board to have their comments and acceptance to let the project team implement our change project at the school (the school management board showed their enthusiastic response and were willing to cooperate and have selected three classes of Grade 8 (8C, 8D, 8E) of the school year 2010 2011 and the block of grades 6 (2011 2012) to take part in the project implementation.
- Distribute and collect questionnaires for teachers and pupils.
- Exchange and discuss the "Child Rights" issues with the school management board, representatives of local authorities, representatives of the parents association, mass union officials and representatives of pupils from Grade 6 to Grade 9.
- Exchange and discuss Children's rights-related issues in schools with the head teacher, 3 selected classes of Grade 8, and the subject teachers in charge of civics, and the children's union.

e. Project stakeholders/participants

The School management board;

- Three head teachers of Grades 8C, 8D, and 8E (2010-2011) and the block of grades 6 (2011-2012), teachers of civics, teachers in charge of children's union.
- All pupils of the three selected classes (8C, 8D, 8E) (2010-2011) and the block of grades 6 (2011-2012).

4. Results

Analysis to find out the root causes leading to truancy

The results of the analysis of the answers col-

lected from three different objects of pupils, their parents and teachers were recorded in the following tables together with their suggestions as remedies.

A. Pupils (representatives from all classes, 50 answer sheets)



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Na	No Groups of reasons that lead to truancy		f truancy
110	Groups of reasons that lead to truancy	period	class
1	Being fed up with learning	х	
	Weak learning	x	х
	Study periods are not really attractive	x	
2	Family situation		
	Difficult economy, school children have to be a help to their	x	х
	families		
	Houses are located far from school, harsh weather conditions	x	х
	(heavy rain, storm)		
	Parents do not really care about their children's learning	х	х
3	Prefer pleasure to learning, poor consciousness in learning		
	Playing games	x	х
	Congregating, fighting	х	х
	Bad friends, wrongdoer inducing	х	х
4	Other reasons		
	Being afraid of criticized in front of the school or class	x	
	-		

Suggestions of the pupils to reduce the rate truancy

- Encourage, give advice and help him/her
- Convince his/her family to pay more attention to his/her learning
- Teachers should take interest in him/her with encouragement (great effect)
- The school must execute learning statutes and be more strict in managing its pupils.

B. Teachers

Causes that lead to truancy

- Weak learning leads to dullness
- Lack of care of one's family
- Induced and seduced by bad people
- Negative learning attitude
- Indulge in playing
- Family members do not live in harmony with each other
- Addicted to internet games
- Pupils do not like to take part or have no interest in certain subjects
- Consciousness of learning is poor
- Afraid of being disciplined
- Pupils do not want to go to school, but their parents force them to go

Suggestions of the teachers to reduce the rate truancy

- Timely attention and encouragement of one's family and school
- Create exiting learning environment to attract the pupils in each learning period

- Teachers should not be so strict with their pupils, instead, they have to encourage their pupils more gentle when they do not understand the lesson or when they show ignorance during learning period.
- The head teacher should find out the reason why his/her pupils play truant more often
- Coordination between parents and local authorities to reduce the time the pupils spend in internet shops.

C. Parents

Causes that lead to truancy

- Parents pay little attention to their children's learning
- Pupils prefer playing to learning
- Induced by bad friends
- Weak learner of a certain subject
- Pupils don't see the benefits of learning
- Family circumstances

Suggestions of the parents to reduce the rate truancy

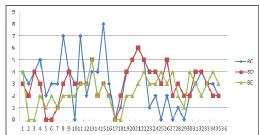
- The parents need to coordinate with the school to create a better learning environment
- The teachers and the school should create a more friendly school so that their pupils are eager to go to school.
- The parents should pay close attention to their children's learning
- The parents have to discover timely when their children play truant
- Rewarding and punishing must be clear-cut
- The school needs to have a tight management of its particular pupil(s)

Some of the causes of truancy are found to be objective, while others are subjective (the school, the parents, the local authorities) that originated from not having executed well and fully the child rights in school.

In order to enhance the awareness of the children in Hoang Dieu school, the Change Project team has carried out the following activities:

- A workshop for the entire school
- Training on special subject for pupils of 3 selected classes and the block of grade 6
- Aggregation of information about the awareness of child rights among the school children through answer sheets.
- Monitor the rate of truancy in three classes of grade 8, among which the class 8C is the key object.

Results of monitored rate of truancy in the 3 classes of grade 8 (school year 2010-2011) after having applied various measures to enhance the pupils' awareness are shown in the graph below:



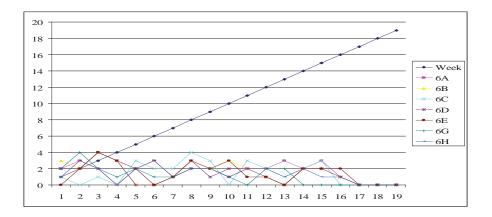
The graph above shows changes in pupils' truancy (hooky) in all three classes.

The classes 8C, 8D, 8E from week 1 to week 16, the rate of truancy is high; from week 17 to week 35, the rate of truancy decreases evidently from week 22 to week 35. This means that after having participated and being trained in the child rights, the pupils' awareness of the three classes has changed distinctly, i.e. the rate of truancy reduced from 5-6 per week in the week 22 down to 2-3 per week in the week 35. In the class 8C in particular, the pupils have a better understanding of the groups of child rights and school. They are better aware of their learning at school, the rate of truancy has reduced remarkably in comparison with the time before the change project was implemented.

On 25 August 2011, the Change agents were invited by the managing board of Hoang Dieu Junior High School for a meeting to discuss about launching a competition campaign among the pupils of block grade 6 comprising 7 classes, using the same approach applied to grade 8 classes. Figure: Block of Grades 6, 2011-2012.

	Class/						
Week	Pupils						
week	i upiis						
	6A/37	6B/36	6C/37	6D/36	6E/37	6G/36	6H/34
1	2	3	1	2	0	2	1
2	3	2	0	2	2	4	3
3	2	4	1	4	4	2	2
4	0	3	0	3	3	1	0
5	2	0	3	0	2	2	2
6	3	0	2	0	0	1	3
7	1	1	2	1	1	1	1
8	2	3	4	3	3	2	2
9	2	2	3	1	2	2	2
10	1	3	0	2	3	1	1
11	2	2	3	2	1	0	2
12	2	1	2	1	1	2	2
13	3	0	1	0	0	2	1
14	2	2	2	2	2	0	2
15	3	2	3	2	2	0	1
16	1	1	0	1	2	0	1
17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
19	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	31	29	27	26	28	22	26

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The rate of truancy in the 7 classes of grade 6 with a total number of 253 pupils (school year 2011-2012) after 19 weeks of implementation is shown in the graph below:

The block of grades 6 from week 1 to week 15 the rate of truancy was still high, from week 16 it gradually reduced and until weeks 17 to 19, no more truancy was recorded.

The total pupils who played truant of classes 6 within 19 weeks were still high from 22 -31 pupils, among them the Class 6A had the highest rate: 31.

Like this, the pupils have had a better understanding of the child rights and school. They have a better sense of their learning at school, the rate of truancy has reduced remarkably compared to the time before the change project was implemented.

5. Discussion and reflections

a. On the positive aspect

- The pupils and teachers have participated in many extracurricular activities.
- The teachers have gradually changed their teaching method, making their teaching periods more attractive.
- The parents have spent more time taking care of and understanding their children.
- The local authorities, the school, the teachers, the parents and the pupils have grasped hold of the CRC concept.

b. Challenges

Despite a change in the rate of truancy in comparison to the time before the Project took place the result was still very moderate.

6. Way Forward on the work on CRC in Hoang Dieu school

The change project from the start only concentrated on 3 among 23 classes with 779 pupils in Hoang Dieu Junior High school. We decided that similar project activities and methodology should be applied to 23 remaining classes of Hoang Dieu Junior High school from the year 2012 onward.

Discussions with the school board about spreading out the success story to the entire school had been agreed upon. The school managing board then launched a competition campaign in the entire school using the slogan "SAY NO TO TRUANCY & DROPOUT".

Reference

The Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989

- Programme Guide Child Rights, Classroom and School Management Lund University Commissioned Education – September 20 – October 13, 2010
- Taking Child Rights Seriously Reflections on five years of an International Training Programme – Lund University Commissioned Education – September 2009
- UNICEF, East Asia and Pacific Regional Office Accessing Child-Friendly school: A
- Guide for Programme Managers in East Asia and the Pacific 2006

Law on Children Protection, Care and Education, 2004

Creating a protective environment for children in Vietnam: an assessment of child protection laws and policies, especially children in special circumstances in Vietnam – MOLISA – UNICEF, 2009

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Project Plan

- Appendix 2: Project Implementation Schedule (2010-2011)
- Appendix 3: Project Implementation Schedule (2011-2012)
- Appendix 4: Questionnaire for Teachers
- Appendix 5: Questionnaire for Pupils
- Appendix 6: List of play-acts

Project Title: "Say No to Truancy"					Project duration: 1 st November 2010 to February 2012	February 20	2	
Purpose (aim): To reduce the rate of truancy in Hoang Dieu secondary school in Dak Rla commune, Dak Mil district, Dak Nong province, Vietnam	ang Di	eu se	econdary school in Dak Rla comm	une, Dak	Mil district, Dak Nong prov	ince, Vietnam		
Activities			Outputs (short-term results) Outbomes	omes	(medium-term results)	Monitori	Monitoring Tools	Time
0. Anchoring the idea with local authorities to seek their support to the group activities within the change project.	Results	•	Approval of the local authorities (commune chairman, school principal, form teacher, supervisors)					Early Nov. 2010
 Meeting with commune chairman Meeting with principals Meeting with form teacher Meeting teacher council 	Indicators	• •	Approvals Strong support			Output 1 ³	Outcome	Nov. 2010
 Develop a set of questionnaire (open questions) to collect all information related to the awareness of the teachers, pupils, parents and school management in one class about CRC 	Results	•••	Questionnaire finalized. Answers from all interviewees analyzed Work plan elaborated.					Nov. 2010; Dec. 2010
 Preparing a set of questionnaire Elaborating work plan for the team 	Indicators	• •	Questionnaire filled in. Work plan finished.			Output 2 ⁴	Outcome	Dec. 2010

APPENDIX 1: Project Plan - Child Rights, Classroom and School Management

³ Same as Indicators for Output – done by observation and minutes ⁴ Same as Indicators for Output – done by questionnaire filled

 Meeting with the school management including the school council to seek their consensus on possible activities to be conducted within their school and surrounding Prepare CRC-related documents Prepare truancy-related questionnaire 	• • • •	CRC-related documents disseminated; Truancy-related questionnaire distributed; Peedback		
 - Group discussions for feedback Summing up discussion Elaborate plan of action Prepare a checklist 	Indicators	Documents disseminated Questionnaire distributed Feedback Minutes drafted Plan of action elaborated Checklist prepared	Output Outcome 3 ⁵	bec. 10 thru Jan. 11
ef t	• • Kesults	A class with high rate of truancy chosen. Plan of Action made available		Nov .10 to April 2011
ones, and collaborate with their parents to create favorable conditions for their children to attend classes regularly. - Meeting with school council for support to monitoring pupils playing truant by organizing games, role-plays, group discussions - Meeting with parents of the truant ones to find better solution to reduce their children's truancy.	Indicators	Agreement & commitment to realize the Plan of Action. Traney monitored. School activities organized	Output Outcome 4 ⁶	8 Nov.10 to April 2011

	discussions held
n of action, checklist	icy monitored, number of activities, c
questionnaire, minutes, plan of	Plan of Action, rate of trual
⁵ Done by	⁶ Done by

 Hold a panel meeting for feedback from all concerned parties and to evaluate all the results - Evaluation meeting. Hold jointly discussions about replicating this model to the entire school. 	• • •	Panel meeting organized. Progress report sent to the mentor and all concerned parties in Vietnamese. Evaluation meeting held	• •	Panel meeting organized. Progress report sent to the mentor and all concerned parties in Vietnamese.			May 15th 2011
1	Indicators	Evaluation meeting Support gained by relevant school authorities for the change project to replicate in the school with over 700 pupils.	• •	The model is fully replicated throughout the school. Overall rate of truancy of the entire school reduced	Output 5 ⁷	Outcome 6 ⁸	April - May 2011
5. Will be decided after China seminar	stiussЯ						June 2011
	Indicators				Output	Outcome	

 7 Done by observations, progress report, evaluation report 8 Done by school commitment, number of new classes involved in another Change Work

APPENDIX 2: Project implementation schedule

School year:	2010 - 2011 -	3 classes of Block grade 8
School year.	2010 - 2011 -	5 classes of Dioek grade o

Time	Contents	Participants
Dec/2010 – Feb/2011	 Attend a number of classes with Child Rights integrated into Civics hours Elaborate sets of questionnaire (for teachers, parents, pupils). Contact with the school managing board 	- Change project team
Week 2 Feb/2011	 Meet with the school managing board (to discuss about deploying and introducing CRC concept; and to discuss about the issue of truancy in school). Introduce, select classes for deployment 	- Change project team - School managing board
Week 3 & 4 February 2011	- Training in CRC, - Distribute questionnaire, exchange discussions, collect filled questionnaire.	 Change project team School managing board, staff, teachers, a number of commune officials
Week 1 & 2 March 2011	 Exchange and discuss CRC related issues; Distribute questionnaire, exchange ideas; Collect filled questionnaire. 	 Change project team Head teachers of 3 classes, Civics teacher, school children's union, children's vanguard union Pupils of classes 8C, 8D, 8E
Week 3 of March 2011- Week 4 of April 1011	Organize act-plays for the selected classes with focus on 7 topics (see attachment.	 Change project team Teacher of Civics, head teachers, cadres in charge of Children's Union & Children's Vanguard Union Pupils of 3 classes
Week 4 of April 2011	 Distribute questionnaire, exchange ideas with a number of parents; Collect filled questionnaire 	- Change project team - a number of parents
Week 4 of April 2011	Recapitulate and collect opinions from the school	- Change project team - School managing board
Week 1&2 of May 2011	Write report	- Change project team

APPENDIX 3: Project implementation schedule

Time	Contents	Participants
First week	- Meet with the school managing board	- School managing board, cadres in
(2011-2012)	to launch a completion campaign in the school.	charge of Children's Union & Children's Vanguard Union, a
	- Introduction, selection of classes for rolling out CRC activities	number of commune staff - Change project team
	- Training in CRC.	- Pupils of block grade 6
	- Distribution of questionnaire, exchange, collection of filled in questionnaire.	
	- Exchange and discussion about CRC;	
	Organize act-plays for the selected classes with focus on 7 topics (see attachment.	
Week 19	- Recapitulate and collect opinions from the school	- Change project team
	- Write report	

School year 2011 – 2012: Term I (from 25 August to December 2011)

APPENDIX 4 QUESTIONNAIRE (for pupils)

No C	lonten t
1	Being a pupil, what duties do you need to observe towards your teachers and parents
2	Being a pupil, do you think regular truancy is acceptable?
	yes no
3	Do you friends often ask you to play truant?
	yes no
	If yes, which study subject do you want to be off?
4	When your friend plays truant, what does (s)he often do?
	□ play games □ Fighting □ Smoking □ Chatting □ Other
5	Being a pupil, do you need to participate in exchange activities?
	yes no
	- What activities?
6	Being a pupil, have you ever been allowed to take part in any rights at school and at home? How
	many groups of rights are there?
7	Being a pupil, have you observed the school internal rules?
	being a pupil, have you observed the senior internal rules:
	already not yet
8	Being a pupil, what do you usually do off class?

9	Being a pupil, what do you usually do if you are not well taken care of by your parents (being		
	abandoned)?		
10	Are you often allowed to go out during holidays, festivities?		
	yes no		
	If yes, where do you often go?		
11	Are you often taken to health center for periodic health check?		
	yes no		
12	Being a pupil, what will you have to do when you encounter the teachers who do not respect y		
	child rights?		
13	Being a pupil, what do you have to do to realize the child rights?		

APPENDIX 4

QUESTIONNAIRE (for pupils)

No	Content			
1	Being a pupil, what duties do you need to observe towards your teachers and parents			
2	Being a pupil, do you think regular truancy is acceptable?			
	yes no			
3	Do you friends often ask you to play truant?			
	yes no			
	If yes, which study subject do you want to be off?			
4	When your friend plays truant, what does (s)he often do?			
	play games Fighting Smoking Chatting Other			
5	5 Being a pupil, do you need to participate in exchange activities?			
	yes no			
	- What activities?			
6	Being a pupil, have you ever been allowed to take part in any rights at school and at home? How			
	many groups of rights are there?			
7	Being a pupil, have you observed the school internal rules?			
	already not yet			
8	Being a pupil, what do you usually do off class?			
9	Being a pupil, what do you usually do if you are not well taken care of by your parents (being			
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	child rights?			
	-			
13	Being a pupil, what do you have to do to realize the child rights?			
	being a pupil, what do you have to do to realize the ennu rights.			

APPENDIX 5

PLAY-ACTS

No.	Content	Participants
1	Pupils playing "truant"	
2	Pupils observing the school internal rules	1. Phan Thanh Hải
3	Duties of pupils towards teachers	2. Hồ Thị Nhật Oanh
4	Duties of pupils towards parents	3.Nguyễn Thị Thanh Nhàn
5	The concern of parents towards their children	4. Võ Thị Quyên and all pupils from Classes
6	Pupils and internet games	8C, 8D, 8E and
7	Pupils and their awareness of the Child Rights	7 classes of grade 6