

Social work in Vietnam: International organisations and service professionalisation for disadvantaged children

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Social work in Vietnam: International organisations and service professionalisation for disadvantaged children

Nguyen Thi Thai Lan

**A thesis in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**



School of Social Sciences

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

February 2015

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

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Abstract

Social work has been reintroduced in Vietnam in the late 1980s and officially recognised since 2010. With the support from international organisations, the professionalisation of social work, even though is at its infancy state, has contributed to address the local challenges and problems resulted from changing in economic paradigm in 1986 and consequences from globalisation.

However, little is known about local and international social work professional development in regard to international organisations and service professionalisation for disadvantaged children. This thesis provides the first theoretical and practice analysis in this area of social work development using Vietnam as a case study. Therefore, this research empirically examines international organisations and service professionalisation for disadvantaged children who make up 18,2 % of the total children (equal to 4.3 millions children). It is hoped to fill in the gaps of knowledge and understanding about the relationship between social work and international organisations in social work professionalisation in a developing country in the global South.

A qualitative research on the five selected international organisations has been conducted to unpack the questions of what and how professionalisation being processed in supporting disadvantaged children. Data were drawn from a triangulation approach with 39 in-depth interviews and three focus group discussions, document analysis, and direct observations. The research findings argue for a mutual relationship between international organisations and the social work professionalisation in local context. Importantly, it also advocates for a critical thinking of indigenising, or "Vietnamising" and authenticising the social work profession and services in respect to the indigenous culture, economic, political, social, and environmental aspects.

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Lan, T. T. N., & Mai, T. X. B. (2011). *Giáo trình Công tác xã hội với cá nhân và gia đình [Textbook: Social work with individuals and families]*. Hà Nội, Việt Nam: Nhà Xuất bản Lao động Xã hội. (in Vietnamese)

Mai, T. X. B., Lan, T. T. N., & Trang, L. N. (2010). *Giáo trình Nhập môn Công tác Xã hội [Textbook: Introduction to social work]*. Hà Nội, Việt Nam: Nhà Xuất bản Lao động Xã hội. (in Vietnamese)

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Lan, T. T. N., Hugman, R., & Baldry, E. (2014, July). *The roles of international organizations in the professionalisation of social work in Viet Nam*. Paper presented at the National Conference on the Review of four year Implementation of the National Project on Social Work Profession Development Da Nang, Viet Nam.

Lan, T. T. N., Hugman, R., & Baldry, E. (2013, July). *The roles of international organizations in the development of social work services for disadvantaged children in Vietnam*. Paper presented at the The 18th Biennial International Consortium for Social Development, Kampala, Uganda.

Lan, T. T. N., Hugman, R., & Baldry, E. (2013, June). *The roles of international organizations in the professionalization of social work services for disadvantaged children in Vietnam*. Paper presented at the Social Work Admistr Climate Change and Disaster risk Reduction and Management Building Capacity and Global Partnership, Manila, Philippines.

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ABSTRACT

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	i
LIST OF PUBLICATIONS.....	iii
ABSTRACT	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi
LIST OF FIGURES	xi
LIST OF TABLES	xii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xiii
GLOSSARY	xv
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 An overview of the Thesis.....	1
1.2.1 Rationale	1
1.2.2 Thesis Aims and Contributions.....	3
1.2.3 Research Methodology	4
1.2.4 Structure of the Thesis	5
1.3 Research Context	9
1.3.1 Demographic Information	9
1.3.2 Culture.....	12
1.3.3 Political Structure.....	15
1.3.4 Social and Economic Situation	17
1.3.5 Social Challenges.....	18
1.3.6 Child Care and Protection	22
1.3.7 Social Work Development.....	27
CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW	33
2.1 Introduction.....	33
2.2 International Organisations	33
2.2.1 United Nations and Its Agencies.....	35
2.2.2 International Non-governmental Organisations	36
2.2.3 International Organisations' Fundamental Operational Fields.....	38
2.2.4 International Organisations ' Challenges.....	41
2.3 International Organisations and Social Work.....	43
2.3.1 Shared Common Roles and Commitment in Global Welfare	43
2.3.2 International Organisation Roles in the Spread of the Social Work Profession .	45
2.3.3 Social Work's Supportive Roles in International Organisations.....	46
2.4 International Social Work	50

2.5 International Organisations in Vietnam.....	52
2.5.1 Presence of the United Nations Agencies	52
2.5.2 International Non-governmental Organisations in Vietnam.....	54
2.5.3 International Non-governmental Organisations' Management Structure in Vietnam.....	60
2.6 International Organisations and Social Work in Vietnam	62
2.6.1 International Organisations and their Contributions to Local Welfare	62
2.6.2 Research on the Relationship between International Organisations and Social Work in Vietnam	62
CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY.....	65
3.1 Introduction	65
3.2 Research Questions	65
3.3 Conceptual Framework.....	65
3.3.1 Theoretical Framework	65
3.3.2 Globalisation	67
3.3.3 Human Rights.....	69
3.3.4 Social Work Indigenisation and Authentisation	72
3.4 Methodology	77
3.4.1 Why a Qualitative Approach?	77
3.4.2 Research Design	79
3.4.3 Data Collection Strategies	81
3.4.4 Sample Selection	87
3.4.5 Data Analysis	93
3.5 Ethical Considerations	95
3.6 Research Considerations.....	97
3.7 Research Trustworthiness.....	97
3.8 Chapter Summary	98
CHAPTER 4. LOCAL CAPACITY AND IOS' EMPOWERMENT STRATEGY	100
4.1 Introduction	100
4.2 Local Capacity: An Important Issue	101
4.2.1 The Lack of Professional Legal Supports and Social Policies	101
4.2.2 Structural Gaps in Child Care and Protection	107
4.2.3 The Lack of Quantity and Quality in the Professional Work Force	109
4.3 Empowerment.....	114
4.3.1 Raising Awareness of Government's Leaders and People.....	114
4.3.2 Capacity Building.....	117
4.4 Changes in Local Competence.....	124

4.4.1 Changes in Legislation and Social Policy Development.....	124
4.4.2 Developing National Programs	127
4.4.3 Human Resource Strengthened.....	128
4.5 Social Work Profession Changes	131
4.6 Chapter Summary.....	133
CHAPTER 5. PROFESSIONALISING SOCIAL WORK SERVICES	135
5.1 Introduction.....	135
5.2 Mainstreaming Social Work Values and Principles into Services.....	135
5.3 Introduction of a Variety of Social Work Services	140
5.3.1 Social Work Service Centre (SWSC).....	141
5.3.2 Community-based Child Care and Protection System (CBCCPS).....	149
5.3.3 Alternative Care	154
5.3.4 Vocational Training	158
5.3.5 Outreach Program	165
5.4 Chapter Summary	171
CHAPTER 6. ISSUES AND CHALLENGES.....	172
6.1 Introduction.....	172
6.2 Needs Assessment	172
6.2.1 Assessing Local Features.....	172
6.2.2 Assessing Clients' Needs	175
6.2.3 How to Conduct Needs Assessments.....	178
6.3 Difficulties Faced during Professionalising Services.....	181
6.3.1 Difficulties from Children and Their Families	181
6.3.2 Difficulties in Communities	185
6.3.3 Social Environment.....	187
6.3.4 Concerns about the Local System	190
6.3.5 Difficulties from International Organisations.....	192
6.4 The Issues of Sustainability	197
6.4.1 Local Commitment	198
6.4.2 Close Attachment with the Local National Directions.....	199
6.4.3 Local Suitability of Programs.....	200
6.4.4 Mainstreaming International Organisation Programs into the Local Policies..	202
6.4.5 The Life Cycle of International Organisation Programs	204
6.4.6 Resource Availability	205
6.5 Chapter Summary	207

CHAPTER 7. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS AND LOCAL PARTNERS.....	209
7.1 Introduction	209
7.2 Highlight Points about International Organisation Structure and Mechanism 	209
7.2.1 The Policy of “One Organisation”	210
7.2.2 Working Orientations	211
7.2.3 International Organisation Leadership Issue	213
7.2.4 Bureaucracy	214
7.2.5 Donors’ Challenges.....	215
7.2.6 International Organisation Networking and Cooperation	218
7.3 International Organisation and Local Partner Cooperation	223
7.3.1 Equal Relationship between International Organisations and Local Partners	224
7.3.2 Other Factors Influencing International Organisation and Local Partner Cooperation.....	229
7.3.3 International and National Differences	234
7.4 International Expert Issues	239
7.4.1 International Experts’ Contribution	239
7.4.2 Challenges	240
7.5 Chapter Summary	244
CHAPTER 8. A QUEST FOR INDIGENISATION	246
8.1 Introduction	246
8.2 Cultural Relevance	246
8.2.1 Respecting Local Cultures	247
8.2.2 Valuing Local Traditions in Child Care.....	249
8.2.3 Cultural Diversity.....	251
8.3 Context Appropriateness	253
8.3.1 Understanding the Locality	254
8.3.2 Fitting into Local Stage of Development	256
8.3.3 Fitting into Local Needs	259
8.3.4 Fitting with Local Orientations, Policies, and Administrative System.....	259
8.4 Localisation	261
8.4.1 The Adjustment Process	262
8.4.2 Acquiring Local Knowledge and Experience.....	266
8.4.3 Developing a Vietnamese Social Work Identity	269
8.5 Chapter Summary	273

CHAPTER 9. DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS	276
9.1 Introduction.....	276
9.2 Discussion of the Research Findings	277
9.2.1 Relationship between International Organisations and Social Work in Vietnam	277
9.2.2 The Appropriateness and Effectiveness of International Organisation Service Models to the Needs of Disadvantaged Children.....	283
9.2.3 The Development of Indigenous and Authentic Social Work Services for Vulnerable Vietnamese Children.....	285
9.3 Implications	292
9.3.1 Theoretical Implications.....	292
9.3.2 Implications for Research	293
9.3.3 Implications for Practice.....	293
9.4 Limitations of the Study	294
9.5 Future Research.....	294
9.6 Final Remarks: A Personal Reflection.....	295
REFERENCE LIST	297
APPENDICES.....	319
Appendix A: Key Historical Development of Social Work in Vietnam	319
Appendix B: National Social Work Core Curricula for University and College levels	321
Appendix C: Social Workers' Job Codes.....	324
Appendix D: Semi-structured Interview Guides.....	326
Appendix E: Participant Information and Consent Form	328
Appendix F: Ethics Approval Certificate	337
Appendix G: Sample of Thematic Summary.....	338
Appendix H: List of Reviewed Government Documents	342

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1.1: MAP OF VIETNAM	10
FIGURE 1.2: POLITICAL STRUCTURE IN VIETNAM	16
FIGURE 1.3: POVERTY INCIDENCE BY REGIONS IN VIETNAM 2010-2013	20
FIGURE 1.4: LABOUR, INVALIDS AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE	24
FIGURE 1.5: NUMBER OF SOCIAL PROTECTION CENTRES	27
FIGURE 2.1: PERCENTAGES OF INGOS BY TIME OF ESTABLISHMENT	56
FIGURE 2.2: NUMBERS OF INGOS FROM 1975 TO 2013	56
FIGURE 2.3: INGOS' AID VOLUME	57
FIGURE 2.4: INGOS TARGET GROUPS	60
FIGURE 2.5: ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE COMMITTEE FOR FOREIGN NGO AFFAIRS	61
FIGURE 3.1: CULTURAL TRANSLATION	77
FIGURE 3.2: STUDY PROCESS	81
FIGURE 3.3: DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES: A TRIANGULATION APPROACH	82
FIGURE 3.4: RATION OF MANAGERS AND STAFF PARTICIPANTS	91
FIGURE 5.1: THREE LEVEL-CHILD CARE AND PROTECTION SERVICES	144
FIGURE 9.1: IO SUPPORT IN THE PROFESSIONALISATION OF SOCIAL WORK SERVICES	280
FIGURE 9.2: PROCESS OF INDIGENISATION OF THE SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION AND SERVICES IN VIETNAM	288
FIGURE 9.3: AUTHENTIC VIETNAMESE SOCIAL WORK	291

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1.1: STATISTICS OF DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN IN VIETNAM	23
TABLE 1.2: SOCIAL WORK PROGRAMS AND TRAINING INSTITUTIONS	30
TABLE 2.1: UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES IN VIETNAM	53
TABLE 2.2: INGOS' ACTIVITIES	58
TABLE 2.3: INGOS' SUPPORTIVE FIELDS	59
TABLE 3.1: DISTRIBUTION OF THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS	92

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CBCCPS	Community-based child care and protection system
CHL	Child help line
COMINGO	Committee for Foreign Non-governmental Organisation Affairs
CPFC	Committee on Population, Families and Children
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
DILISA	District Division of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs
DOLISA	Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
GOV	Government of Vietnam
GSO	General Statistics Offices of Vietnam
IASSW	International Association of Schools of Social Work
ICRC	International Committee for the Red Cross
ICSW	International Council on Social Welfare
IFGS	Institute of Family and Gender Studies
IFSW	International Federation of Social Workers
IGO	Inter-governmental organisation
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International non-governmental organisation
IO	International organisation
ISEE	Institute for Studies of Society, Economics and Environment
ISS	International Social Services
LABS	Livelihood advancement business school
LISA	Labour, invalids, and social affairs
LP	Local partner
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MOCST	Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism of Vietnam
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam
MOFA	Ministry of Home Affairs of Vietnam
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam
MOLISA	Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs of Vietnam

NGO	Non-governmental organisation
PACCOM	Peoples' Aid Co-ordinating Committee
Plan	Plan International
SC	Save the Children
SPC	Social protection centre/institution
SWSC	Social work service centre
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
ULISA	Ward Unit and Social Affairs
UN	United Nations
UN-HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNAIDS	United Nations Aids
UNDIP	United Nations Department of Public Information
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
UNHCR	United Nations High Committee of Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drug and Crime
UNRPA	United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
UNWomen	United Nations Women
VNA	Vietnamese National Assembly
VUFO	Vietnamese Union of Friendship Organisations
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organisation

GLOSSARY

Children

According to the Vietnam's law on protection, care, and education of children promulgated by the Vietnamese National Assembly, children are "Vietnamese citizens under 16 years old" (VNA, 2004).

Disadvantaged children

The definition of the term 'disadvantaged' or 'vulnerable' children in the Vietnam as understood as the children in difficult/special circumstances, they are "unable to exercise their fundamental rights and integrate with the family and community" (VNA, 2004). In the Article 40 of this law, children in different circumstances are classified into 10 categories, which are (1) orphaned and abandoned children, (2) children with disabilities, (3) children being victims of toxic chemicals, (4) children infected by HIV/AIDS, (5) children doing hard and hazardous jobs or contacting noxious substances, (6) children working far from their families, (7) street children, (8) sexually abused children, (9) children addicted to narcotics, and (10) children in conflict with the law (VNA, 2004).

Besides that, the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs of Vietnam has added four other groups into their statistics of children in special circumstances. They are: trafficked and kidnapped children, physically abused children, children in poor households, and injured children (MOLISA, 2011a).

Since this law is under process of review, there are more vulnerable groups that are suggested to be included: Children are sexually exploited (for commercial purposes); children are victims of abuse and violence; children whose parents are serving the decisions on handling administrative violations in the reformatory school, compulsory education institution and compulsory detoxification establishment; and children subject to early marriage (H. L. Loan, 2014).

The definition of each group of disadvantaged children is scattered in several legal and under law documents, lexicon book, and research papers.

In a review of child protection laws and policies, especially children in special circumstances conducted by MOLISA and UNICEF-Vietnam in 2009, some types of children in special circumstances are defined as follow:

Orphaned and abandoned children are those both of whose parents are either deceased or have abandoned them and have no relatives to rely on; children with one parent who is deceased and the other is either missing or incapable of raising the child;

and children who have been abandoned by their parents and are without parental care.

Sexually abused and commercial sexual exploited children are ones who have been sexually abused (rape, obscene acts, etc.) and children subject to commercial sexual exploitation (prostitution, sex tourism, pornography, sale, and trafficking).

Children subject to harmful or hazardous labour are those subject to harmful or hazardous labour that is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.

Children affected by HIV/AIDS are children who are HIV positive; children who are affected by HIV/Aids because of the loss of a parental caregiver and/or because their families are severely strained by its consequences (orphans and children living in affected families); and children who are most prone to be infected.

Children addicted to narcotics refer to children who use illegal drugs and who are addicted to illegal drugs (MOLISA & UNICEF-Vietnam, 2009, pp. 9,10).

In Vietnamese law on protection, care and education of children, *street children* are defined as children are who leave their families and earn a living by themselves with unfixed places of livelihood and residence; children wandering with their families (VNA, 2004).

In the MOLISA-UNICEF published “Lexicon of Child Protection Terms”, three other types of vulnerable children groups are defined. They are:

Children in conflict with the law refers children between 10 or 13-16 years who (1) have been convicted of violation of a criminal code(s); (2) are being investigated for violation of criminal codes; and (3) are at-risk of violating a criminal code.

Children who are victims of dioxin are children born to families with a father/mother involved in the American War in the southern battle and in areas sprayed with agent orange/dioxin since 1961 to 1974 who are infected and affected by dioxin which lead to deformity, disability, and life-threatening illness.

Children with a disability is a person under 16 years of age who have physical or intellectual impairments with different causes (accidents, illness, genetic, chemical toxins, etc.) which lead to difficulties in learning and daily activities (Hũu et al., 2009).

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This thesis presents an empirical examination of the relationship between the development of the social work profession and international organisations through the growth of the social work profession and its services for disadvantaged children in Vietnam. It is hoped to enrich international understanding about the process of professionalisation in a non-Western environment toward the development of indigenous and authentic social work interventions.

This introductory chapter provides a synopsis of this thesis and the study context, highlighting, in the first section, a number of questions in relation to this research: What are its aims and contributions? How was it conducted methodologically? And how is it structured? In the second section, key features of the research context are introduced, including present social and child care protection and a brief description of the history of the social work profession in Vietnam.

1.2 An overview of the Thesis

1.2.1 Rationale

A major paradigm shift in economic and political policies, known as “Đổi mới” or Renovation since the mid-80s, has brought about both advantages and challenges for Vietnam. On the one hand, an impressive economic growth rate and improvement in living standards have been achieved thanks to the replacement of the old, centrally planned economy to the socialist, market oriented economy. Like other countries in transition, Vietnam has been positioning itself more openly in the international sphere than it did during its embargoed period. On the other hand, despite these achievements, and even following from them, the country faces increasing levels of social problems, such as a high poverty rate with a widening gap between rich and poor (Đàm, 2014; Gien et al., 2007; Hong & Ohno, 2005; Hugman, Lan, & Hong, 2007; MOLISA, 2014c; MOLISA & UNICEF-Vietnam, 2009; WB, 2012; Yuen, 2012), a decline in traditional family patterns of interaction (Hanh, 2011; Hugman et al., 2007; Mai et al.,

2008; MOLISA & UNICEF-Vietnam, 2009; Oanh, 2002), and a high proportion of disadvantaged persons, including growing numbers of children in need of special protection (Hong & Ohno, 2005; Lan, Hugman, & Briscoe, 2010; UNICEF-Vietnam, 2011a). It is estimated by the Vietnam Government that about 28% of the Vietnamese population needs social work services, in response to the issues in child care and child protection, the social dimensions of health, HIV and drug misuse, and so on. More specifically, approximately 18,2% of the total children (equal to about 4.3 million children) are in need of social work services (GOV, 2010a; MOLISA, 2011a; UNICEF-Vietnam, 2014). Hence, child care and child protection services are greatly in urgent demand. Nonetheless, Vietnamese social protection, which has been inherited from the old subsidised and non-professional model, is not suitable for the newly emerging issues and problems. This requires a dramatic change in the professional protective service delivery system for vulnerable children (Dzung, 2001; Lan, 2012; Lan, Hugman, & Baldry, 2013a, 2013b; UNICEF-Vietnam, 2005, 2014).

With support from international organisations, the social work profession has been reintroduced in Vietnam since the 1990s, after a long stagnancy in the late 70s and 80s, and officially recognised in 2010 under Government Decision No 32/2010/QĐ-TTg on the Approval of the Social Work Profession Development Project 2010-2020 (Gien et al., 2007; GOV, 2010a; Hines, Cohen, Tran, Lee, & Phu, 2010; Hugman, Durst, Loan, Lan, & Hồng, 2009; Lan, 2010; Oanh, 2002). Since then, professional service programs and models have been developed to support the government in meeting the needs of vulnerable people, especially disadvantaged children. However, there has been no research conducted to examine the roles and contributions of international organisations in this field (Hines et al., 2010; Hugman, 2010b; Lan et al., 2010). Therefore, the issue of whether or not these models are appropriate in the context of Vietnam is still unanswered.

As a profession well-known for its services in improving human wellbeing, particularly for vulnerable people, social work has been developing all over the world and is now a global profession (Healy & Link, 2012). Midgley (1981), a pioneer in the fields of international social work, social work, and social policy in the developing world, was the first to critique the phenomenon of professional imperialism, and

pointed to the flow of professional development from the global North to the South. Historically, it is evident that there has been a developing relationship between social work and international organisations, such as United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Save the Children (SC) and many other international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) which have been actively involved in the development work and human rights for the betterment of people, especially vulnerable groups (Doherty, 2009; Healy, 2008; Hugman, 2010b; Libal & Harding, 2012; S. Wilson, 2012). To support their tasks in developing countries, international organisations, including the United Nations (UN) and INGOs are actively involved in this professional expansion.

Nonetheless, there is a serious dearth of research examining the relationship between international organisations and the development of social work and its services for children in developing countries, particularly in non-Western cultures, such as Vietnam (Hines et al., 2010; Hugman, 2010b). Thus, it is important to study international organisations and the professionalisation of social work and service development for disadvantaged children in Vietnam. In addition, it is necessary to examine how to indigenise this profession in a non-Western context that is different from the profession's origin.

1.2.2 Thesis Aims and Contributions

This thesis aims to examine the relationship between international organisations and the professionalisation of services for vulnerable children in Vietnam. Another key purpose of this thesis is to argue the necessity of analysing the appropriateness and effectiveness of these service models and how they can contribute to developing indigenous and authentic Vietnamese services for disadvantaged children.

The present thesis makes four distinct contributions to the development of social work services for disadvantaged children and the international social work literature.

First, it presents a detailed study of the role of international organisations in the development of professional social work in a non-Western context that is in Vietnam.

Second, it proposes suggestions for social policy development for disadvantaged children with professional standards that meet the best interests of children and respects their rights.

Third, it provides recommendations for the development of indigenous and authentic service models for local disadvantaged children and their families. This is in the line with the National Project on Development of the Social Work Profession's objective of setting up appropriate service models for vulnerable people, particularly for children in difficult circumstances.

Finally, this empirical research enriches the literature on international social work by presenting evidence of the relationship between international organisations and social work professionalisation and the need to thoughtfully indigenise this Western profession to a non- Western country.

1.2.3 Research Methodology

This thesis employed middle-range theory—a theoretical construction approach that integrates theory and empirical research, as a conceptual framework. The theory can help to abstract the empirical evidence of the mutual relationship between international organisations and the professionalisation of social work in Asian, specifically South East-Asian countries (Calhoun, 2010; Dobratz, 2011; Merton, 1957, 1968). Three main theories and concepts: globalisation, human rights, and indigenisation and authentisation were utilised in this research. These were important theoretical points for analysing the involvement of international organisations in developmental work in developing countries (Healy, 2008; Hugman, 2010b), the increasing social problems in the local context (Dominelli, 2010a; Ife, 2008), the need for rights-based services (Ife, 2008; Reichert, 2007; Staub-Bernasconi, 2012; Wronka, 2012), and the development of indigenous and authentic services for local disadvantaged children (Gray, 2010; Gray, Coates, & Bird, 2008; Hugman, 2010b; Midgley, 1981; Walton & Abo El Nasr, 1988; Yan, 2013; Yan & Cheung, 2006; Yip, 2006).

Methodologically, a qualitative approach was adopted through the adoption of a multiple case study method that has been increasingly used as a research strategy in social work and other social sciences (Carey, 2012; Drisko, 2013; Gilgun, 1994; Padgett, 1998; Yin, 2003b). Five international organisations were selected as units of analysis, representing different forms of support to the development of professional services for disadvantaged children.

A triangulation data collection strategy was used to generate a broad range of information, which includes 39 in-depth interviews and three group discussion, an analysis of relevant documents related to international organisations and Vietnamese government strategies, policies, and guidelines for child care and protection, and direct observations at three project sites in Hanoi (north), Da Nang (central), and Binh Duong (south). A thematic analysis was applied to analyse collected data. This data processing and analysis was supported by qualitative data processing software—NVivo 9. Themes were reassessed initially from transcriptions in Vietnamese, then in English, and compared for the most valuable topics.

1.2.4 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is structured into three sections. Section 1 which consists of the first three Chapters provides an overall background to the thesis; Section 2, covering Chapters 4 to 8 presents the research findings; and Section 3, consisting of Chapter 9, discusses the findings, gives recommendations, and concludes the research.

Section 1

Chapter 2 provides a two-part review of the literature on international organisations and their relationship with the social work profession. (Hereafter the general term of “international organisation” will be abbreviated to “IO”). The first section draws together international literature on IOs’ structure, roles, and challenges. Additionally, the previous research and literature about IOs and social work is also discussed to highlight the gaps for further study. The second section presents an overview of IOs in Vietnam. It portrays to what extent IOs and the social work profession is studied in Vietnam.

Chapter 3 details the methodological approach utilised in this thesis, starting with reasons for a qualitative approach in obtaining a thick and in-depth description to analyse the way in which IOs are involved in the development of social work service models for local disadvantaged children and the professionalisation of social work. Subsequently, it describes the thesis's conceptual framework, in which the theory of globalisation, the human rights perspective, and the concept of indigenisation were used to shape the researcher's perception in exploring IOs and the development of professional service models. The research design is then explained via a multiple case study method. Finally, the research process is demonstrated by a detailed description of research triangulation data collection strategies, consisting of the way in which the research participants were selected, the ways in-depth and group interviews were carried out; and how document analysis and observations was conducted. Additionally, it also illustrates the procedures of data processing, coding, and analysis with support from qualitative software and a thematic approach. Other related research issues, such as ethical and research considerations and research trustworthiness, are discussed in the last part of the chapter.

Section 2

From Chapters 4 to 8, research findings are presented to exemplify the way in which IOs are involved in the development of service programs for disadvantaged children and how these programs should be adjusted to fit the local needs and context based on basic professional principles. These support the hypothesis of the necessity of building indigenous and authentic social work services for vulnerable children. Each chapter is presented by an evidence-based pattern in which participants' perspectives are conceptualised into themes and sub-themes. Questions are posed to raise significant issues and topics that will be addressed in the final chapter.

Chapter 4 discusses findings of the IOs' first stage of professionalising their processes, where a comprehensive empowerment strategy is employed for their local partners. The chapter commences with an assessment of the local professional supportive environment for the development of social work services for disadvantaged children. It then describes how the IO empowerment process takes place: from awareness raising for governmental leaders and community people, to capacity

building for all local partners' stakeholders, from a grass-roots level (community collaborators) to direct service providers and managing officers. The last part of the chapter analyses the changes in local competence both at a macro level (changes in legislation and social policy) and a micro level (human resource). Additionally, changes in the professional environment are also presented.

Chapter 5 continues to unpack the professionalisation of social work services for disadvantaged children, starting with mainstreaming professional values into services. A variety of professional services are developed that have brought a wide range of alternative care for vulnerable children in Vietnam. For example, new social work models, such as social work service centres, are being established to meet local needs. All of these IO service models are introduced, including their backgrounds and main services as well as challenges they faced during their implementation phases. The chapter highlights the application of professional values and principles into the service models' development that contributes to make them appropriate for local conditions.

Chapter 6 deals with issues and challenges in the overall planning process of social work service models' development. It first discusses need assessment as an important step in designing and constructing service programs suitable for local needs and conditions. Second, participants' expectations about social work services for disadvantaged children are detailed through the way in which participants seek changes in the service system, the social work profession, and community accessibility. Third, difficulties during service professionalisation are discussed to inform IOs and local partners (hereafter referred to as "LPs") about overcoming these challenges in practice. Finally, IO service program-sustainability is discussed to facilitate analysis related to IOs and LPs' contributing factors, including local commitment, alignment with local national directions, role transference, and resource availability.

Chapter 7 discusses the relationship between IOs and LPs to the extent to which both can maintain mutual cooperation for the best interest of local disadvantaged children. This chapter starts with an overview of the key IO structural issues and mechanisms that impact on IOs and LPs' relationship. These consist of: the tendency to merge into one organisation, their orientations, their bureaucracy, challenges from donors, and the IO network. The most important aspect of the chapter discusses IO

and LP cooperative discourse, in which the topic of an equal relationship is analysed to give readers a sense of how power, control, and role transfer are conceptualised. It also outlines the factors that contribute to IOs and LPs' collaboration, such as finding a common language, local partners' willingness and commitment, IOs' altruism and the commitment to, and flexibility of adjustment. Other challenges related to the connections between the IOs and LPs are explored to better understand the process of building mutual relationships. The last section of the chapter discusses the issue of international experts who provide technical consultation on IOs' service programs in Vietnam.

Chapter 8 addresses the crucial thesis question of operationalising the concept of indigenisation in service program development for disadvantaged children and social work professionalisation. It tackles three fundamental concepts that are defined as a framework for building indigenous and authentic services in Vietnam, namely: cultural relevance, context appropriateness, and localisation. Cultural relevance is identified by the way in which IO programs are designed and implemented to match the local cultures. It is argued that not only is respecting local traditional cultures in child care important for professionalising services for disadvantaged children in Vietnam, but also so is trying to make local changes to welcome other professional alternative interventions. The second section discusses in what way an IO service program can meet the criteria of context appropriateness. It further analyses the suitability of local circumstances, and how to take into account local needs and demands and local central governmental orientations and directions. The final section focuses on how to process the localisation, or in the participants' word, the "Vietnamising" of professional services for local vulnerable children. Adapting to the local context is the first step that contributes to indigenising services. Other factors that contribute to the localising process are also discussed. Importantly, developing a Vietnamese social work identity is examined in the last section to confirm the necessity of localising the social work profession and its therapeutic interventions.

Section 3

Finally, Chapter 9 addresses the implications of the research findings vis-à-vis the theoretical framework. This concluding discussion focuses on an evaluation of the

roles of IOs in the development of services for disadvantaged children and the professionalisation of social work in Vietnam. It also addresses the question of how these findings contribute to social policy development and service model building for local child care and protection. Despite significant difficulties in these processes the thesis argues for the positive roles of IOs in the professionalisation of social work and its services and the critical need for developing indigenous and authentic professional services for vulnerable children in Vietnam.

1.3 Research Context

This section provides demographic information on Vietnam. Local, social, political and cultural features are highlighted to increase understanding of the local context. In the second part, a comprehensive picture of present social realities and current social protection programs is examined. Finally, a brief description of the historical development of the social work profession in Vietnam is presented.

1.3.1 Demographic Information

1.3.1.1 Geography

Located in the Indochina peninsula, Vietnam borders China, Laos PR, Cambodia, and the Eastern Sea (see Figure 1.1).

The country covers an area of 331,698 square kilometres with 1,650 kilometres in length from its northernmost to southernmost point (GOV, 2014b). The narrowest part of the country is 50 kilometres in width while the widest part is 500 kilometres. Three quarters of its land area is low mountains and hills (GOV, 2014b; MOFA, 2014c). With its terrain of a narrow strip of land coupled with many mountains and hills, Vietnam faces challenges for rapid geographic expansion that increases the poverty gap and social service accessibility.



Figure 1.1: Map of Vietnam

Source: [World Sites Atlas](https://www.sitesatlas.com) (sitesatlas.com)

1.3.1.2 History

Vietnam has a history documented over 4,000 years, commencing with the Văn Lang State established in the 7th century B.C.E. that created a civilisation influencing all Southeast Asian. Notably, Vietnamese history has been marked by continual wars and colonisation by foreign countries. In its long feudal period, from the 2nd century B.C.E to mid-twentieth century C.E., it was ruled by different Chinese dynasties (GOV, 2014e; MOFA, 2014c). From the early 19th century to the late 20th century C.E., it had to endure wars and revolutions against Western countries' imperialism and colonialism (MOFA, 2014a). On the 2nd of September 1945, Vietnam proclaimed its independence as the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (now the Socialist Republic of Vietnam). However, the country only reunited in 1975. In essence, this long history of feudalism and the experience of long lasting wars against foreign invasion have contributed to its slow social development and consequently its people's vulnerability.

1.3.1.3 Population Ethnic Groups

According to the last survey conducted in 2012 by Vietnam's General Statistics Office (GSO), Vietnam's population was 88.7729 million, of which, 68.06% live in rural areas. The growth rate of the urban population is 2.30% compared to 0.49% for the rural population (GSO, 2014a). The ratio between males and females is 49.46% and 50.54% respectively. The country has a young population, with more than half of its people under the age of 25 (GSO, 2010a).

It is important to note that Vietnam is one of the world's most densely populated countries, with 260 people per square kilometre. Yet the population is unevenly distributed across the country. For example, the density is greater in the Red River Delta in the north, the South East, and the Mekong River Delta (962, 644, and 429 person/square kilometre respectively) than in the Northern midlands and mountain areas, the North Central and the Central coastal areas, and the Central Highlands (120, 200, and 90 persons/square kilometre respectively) (GSO, 2014a). Its high density and uneven distribution of population leads to challenges in social development and welfare provision, particularly in the mountainous areas.

Ethnically, Vietnam is a rich and multi-ethnic country with 54 ethnic groups. The biggest group is the Kinh that accounts for 86% of the population. The other 14 % of the population comprises 53 different ethnic groups. The Kinh people mainly live in the low land and deltas, whereas the majority of the other 53 ethnic groups are scattered over mountainous areas and the midland, spreading from the North to the South. All ethnic groups have their own diverse and unique cultural characteristics (MOFA, 2014b).

1.3.1.4 Language and Religion

Vietnam has great diversity in its languages and religions. Vietnamese is the official language. Twenty-four of the 53 ethnic groups also have their own written languages. There are eight groups of different languages used by ethnic minorities in Vietnam, they are: Việt-Mường, Tày-Thái, Mon-Khmer, Mông-Dao, Kàdai, Austro-Polynesian, Chinese, and Tibeto (GOV, 2014a).

In Vietnam religion plays an important role and encompasses every day activities. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam (MOFA) (2014d), 95% of the population has a religious faith. Annually, about 8,500 religious and belief activities are organised nationally and locally. There are six main religions in Vietnam, they are: Buddhism, Catholicism, Protestantism, Islam, Caodaism, and HoaHao Buddhism (MOFA, 2014d; Tịnh, 2014). The last two religions are indigenous.

Buddhism is the most popular religion and was introduced in Vietnam early in the C.E. with most of its development phase under Lý-Trần Dynasties from the early 11th to the late 14th century. Currently, about 11 million Vietnamese are Buddhist followers. Buddhism manages itself, with more than 17,000 pagodas and 44 training schools and institutes (MOFA, 2014d). Together with Confucianism and Taoism, Buddhism has been considered a foundation for the construction of Vietnamese thought (Tho, 2012).

Catholicism, Protestantism, and Islam were introduced in Vietnam from the 10th to early 20th centuries. Islam was firstly brought by the Chăm people in the 10th and 11th centuries. Catholicism was set up later, in the 15th century, by European missionaries. However, it is now the second largest religious group. More recently, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Protestantism was introduced.

In relation to the two indigenous religions, Caodaism was created in Tây Ninh province in 1926. It ranks third in number of followers, who practice in 1,200 temples in 37 provinces and cities in Vietnam. HoaHao Buddhism (also called, simply, HoaHao) was initiated most recently in 1939 in Hoà Hảo Village, Tân Châu District, An Giang Province. HoaHao members are concentrated in the Mekong River delta in 20 provinces and cities (MOFA, 2014d).

1.3.2 Culture

1.3.2.1 An Introduction

Vietnamese culture has a long developmental history closely attached to the nation's formation commencing from the Đông Sơn cultural community. This was organised around a large village community and water rice cultivation (GOV, 2014d). These

characteristics were continued in the first Stage of Vietnam, named Văn Lang-Âu Lạc, lasting for nearly 3,000 years up to the end of the first millennium B.C.E.

In the second Stage, Vietnam—Đại Việt, Vietnamese culture changed with the influences of Chinese domination and Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism (GOV, 2014d). Confucianism was introduced to Vietnam between 111 B.C.E. to 939 C.E.). During the time of the Lý-Trần Dynasties (1010-1400 C.E.), Vietnamese politics and culture was increasingly directed by Confucianism (Yao, 2003). However, the blooming of Confucianism, which at this time was Neo-Confucianism, occurred later in the Lê (1428-1788) and Nguyễn dynasties (1802-1845) (Sử, 2011; Yao, 2003).

Confucianism refers to a philosophy of the social order (concerning status and age, and obedience to the emperor, superiors, parents and husbands) and virtue. It became a guide to morality and good government (Taylor, 2004). Confucian ideology contains four prevalent values. First is a hierarchical relationship among people known as The Five Relations: King (ruler)/follower (subject), father/son, husband/wife, older brother/younger brother, and friend/friend (Littlejohn, 2011; Taylor, 2004).

Second is the consideration of the family as the basic unit of society, where people learn how to develop their affection and love for the elder members in the family. Hence, when one has a problem, family is an important source of support, especially emotional (Bell, 2003; Chan, 2003).

Third is its emphasis on education. The Great Learning (Taylor, 2004; Yao, 2003) that refers to the role of learning for every person is of prime value for a person, for a family, and for a nation. The process of learning for a child to be deemed a moral person under Confucianism requires five Relations, three Obediences, and four Virtues. The Three Obediences are set up to guide women's life in traditional society. They are: obedience to her father before her marriage, to her husband during her marriage, and to her son after her husband dies. The Four Virtues refer to women's conventional roles in the society and family. They comprise of: diligent work, a modest appearance, proper speech, and moral conduct (Taylor, 2004).

The fourth value is Humaneness or Benevolence that teaches people how to show love and care for people regardless of their ethnicity and race (Littlejohn, 2011). Littlejohn (2011) lists the four things that a moral person should do:

(1) to endure hardship and enjoy happy circumstances, (2) to identify without prejudice and with accuracy the individuals who are truly good and evil, (3) to be free from the desire to do wrong, and (4) to stand out from those who go astray. (p. 29)

1.3.2.2 Impacts of Confucianism on Perceptions of Child Raising

Vietnam is among many countries in East Asia and Southeast Asia that is profoundly influenced by Confucian ideology (Taylor, 2004), arguably, even more so than Japan and Korea (Yao, 2003). At present, even though it is not as strongly influential as in the feudal regime, its values and practices continue in Vietnamese daily life (Bell & Chaibong, 2003; Yao, 2003). As Yao (2003) notes, “it seems that its basic concepts remain unconsciously embedded in Vietnamese morality and values” (p. 151). From its basic precepts, Confucianism has considerable impact on child raising in Vietnam. This leads to concerns in the development of social work services for local disadvantaged children, such as carers’ perceptions about child participation rights, or not being open to alternative child care forms, which is discussed in later Chapters.

First, Vietnamese people value and stress the family more than the individual to a degree that is different from Western culture. Second, since Confucianism highlights the crucial role of family in helping individuals to learn about themselves and their relation to others, it places a strong emphasis on the responsibility of developing a sense of care and love among family members as well as mutual responsibility among relatives (Taylor, 2004). It is understandable, therefore, that family should be the first place people and children will think of for support when they have a problem.

Third, the Confucian hierarchical relationship order is emphatically patriarchal (Rosenlee, 2006). Consequently, women and children are placed in a subordinate position to the men and older persons in the family. It should be noted that filial piety becomes central in the teaching of children (Huyền, 1995; UNCEF-Vietnam, 2004).

Fourth, Three Obediences belief has influenced people’s thinking and behaviours about boys and girls. Sons are preferred to daughters. Women and girls are under

pressure to meet the expectations of obeying fathers and husbands, and doing housework (Vân, 2014).

Lastly, there is a high expectation of education that creates intense pressure in children's lives (Thuỷ, 2010). This is likely to affect children's interests in other recreational and social activities, such as playing sports and becoming involved in voluntary work.

In essence, there are positive and also negative influences of Confucianism on Vietnamese's child care and protection. One needs to think critically about the way in which it affects the development of indigenous and authentic social work services for disadvantaged children in Vietnam.

1.3.3 Political Structure

The Vietnamese political system is highly structured (see Figure 1.2). There are three systems running the country: the Communist Ruling Party, the State, and the Government.

The Communist Party of Vietnam is the highest body in the political system. It is a one party system, leading Government and State. The Party guides the national policy making process (GOV, 2014c).

In the State System, the Vietnamese National Assembly (VNA) is the highest representative organ of Vietnamese citizens and highest state power of Vietnam. It has constitutional and legislative rights. The main functions of VNA are: legislative, deciding the important issues of the country, and carrying out the supreme supervision power of all activities of the State. Under VNA, there are lower state levels, such as the provincial People's Council, the district/cities People's Council, and the ward People's Council (GOV, 2014c).

The Government of Vietnam (GOV) is the executive body of VNA and the supreme state administrative agency. It is in charge of assigned tasks set by the State in politics, social-economics, national defence, security, and international relations. Under the Government, there are 18 ministries and equivalent organisations.

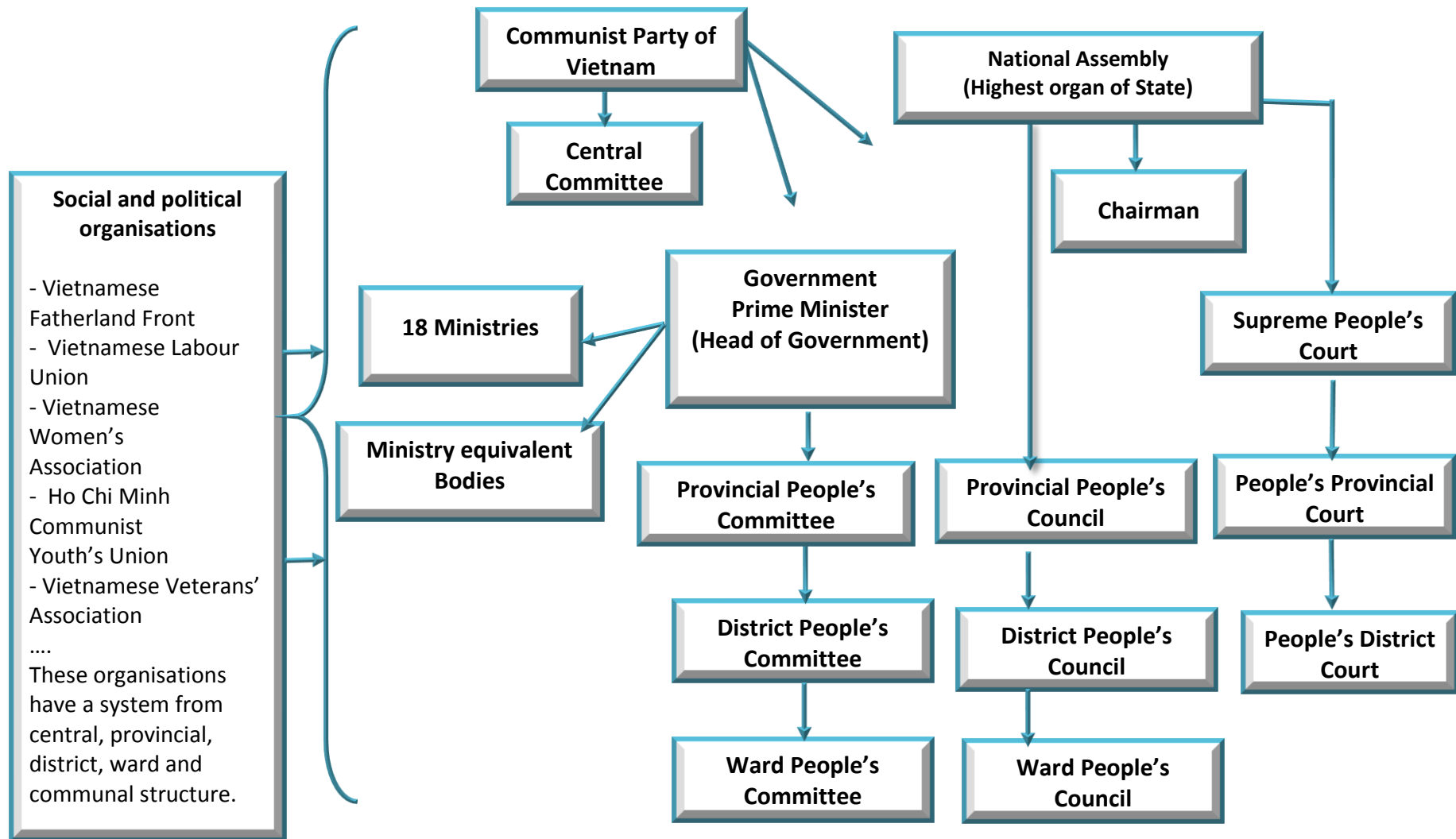


Figure 1.2: Political structure in Vietnam

The Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs of Vietnam (MOLISA) is mandated to be in charge of social affairs, including child care and protection. However, there is also involvement from other ministries in carrying out this assignment within their charged fields, such as the Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam (MOET), the Ministry of Health of Vietnam (MOH), the Ministry of Finance of Vietnam (MOF), and the Ministry of Home Affairs of Vietnam (MOHA). At the lower administrative levels, there is the People's Committee in 63 provinces/cities, 641 districts/towns and 11145 wards/communes (GOV, 2014c; GSO, 2014b).

The Supreme People's Court is the highest judicial organisation of Vietnam. Under this central system is the provincial (People's Provincial Court), and district levels (People's District court) (GOV, 2014c).

There is also a system of social and political organisation, which includes the Fatherland Front and the Labour Union, as well as mass organisations (the Women's Association, the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth's Union, and the Veterans' Association), and professional associations. These organisations (except for professional associations) have a well-organised structure, which runs from the central, to the provincial/city, district/town, ward, village, and to small community groups within that village. These organisations participate in the implementation of the Party's guidelines and the Government's policies (GOV, 2014c).

1.3.4 Social and Economic Situation

The Renovation, launched nearly 30 years ago in Vietnam, has resulted in social changes. In the Human Development Report 2013, Vietnam's Human Development Indicators (HDI) in 2012 ranked 127 out of 187 countries and territories, standing at 33 of the medium human development group after some ASEAN countries, such as Thailand, the Philippines and Indonesia, and before Cambodia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic (UNDP, 2013). It was selected in a group of countries that registered large reductions in HDI shortfall or high rates of growth in gross national income per capita between 1990 and 2012 (UNDP, 2013). Over these years, Vietnam's HDI value increased from 0.439 to 0.617, an increase of 41% or an average annual increase of about 1.6%. Nevertheless, in an UNDP report on Social Services for Human

Development in Vietnam in 2011, the gap in HDI between the poor and wealthier provinces is significant (UNDP, 2011).

Additionally, Vietnam is considered a successful nation in achieving the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The latest national report conducted in 2010 (10 years after the UN MDGs launched), reported that Vietnam had completed two third of its journey to attain these Goals. It had achieved the first four Goals (Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, Achieve universal primary education, Promote gender equality and empower women, Reduce child mortality) and Goal 8 (Develop a global partnership for development) to some extent. It is striving to achieve Goal 5 (Improve maternal health). Goals 6 and 7 (Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other disease and Ensure environmental sustainability) are still challenging tasks (GOV, 2010b).

Economically, Vietnam's performance in recent years has been impressive, with an average annual economic growth rate of 7.2% during the period 2001-2010 (GSO, 2012; Ngân, 2011). With its considerable economic progress, Vietnam was on the cusp of gaining a middle-income country status by the end of 2010 (WB-in-Vietnam, 2014).

1.3.5 Social Challenges

Changes have brought positive aspects to Vietnamese social life, thanks to impressive progress in economic growth. However, consequences of a market economy and globalisation have challenged social development in this country. Vietnam continues to face developmental and social challenges, including a high poverty rate and wealth disparities, a rising number of disadvantaged people, and a decline in family values and traditions.

1.3.5.1 High Poverty Rate and Wealth Disparities

Although considered as a successful country in poverty alleviation, the poverty rate in Vietnam is still relatively high. According to MOLISA's statistics, the poverty proportion (using national poverty standards) has been reduced from 58.1% in 1993 to 22% in 2005 to 9.45% in 2010 under the old poverty line; and from the period of 2010 to 2013

when a new poverty line was applied, it decreased by one third, from 14.2% in 2010 to 9.6% in 2013¹ (MOLISA, 2014e; Tâm, 2014). The total number of poor households in 2011 was 2,580,885. In addition to this, the number of households near the poverty line (1,530,295), which is equal to 6.98%, is also worrying (MOLISA, 2012b). There is a considerable concern over the high rate of households falling back into poverty (7% - 10%), especially ethnic minority households in the northern, north-western, and north-central regions (Ngân, 2011).

While the incidence of poverty has declined in recent years, disparities between the rich and poor, between different geographic locations, and ethnic groups have increased (see Figure 1.3).

The GINI coefficient increased from 0.329 in 1993 to 0.358 in 2008, and to 0.46 in 2009 (Hiền, 2011; Ngân, 2011). The disparity between the 20% of the highest income group and the 20% of the lowest income group rose 7 fold in 1995 to 8.9 fold in 2009 (Hiền, 2011). This rising inequality has made vulnerable people more disadvantaged because of their lack of competitiveness in the labour market as well as their limited capacity for risk prevention (Phúc, 2012). Ethnic minority poverty is a persistent challenge. Although only 14% of the total population, 53 ethnic groups accounted for 47% of the poor in 2010, compared to 29% in 1998. This poverty gap increased to 66.3 % of the minority population compared to only 12.9% of the Kinh majority in 2012 (WB, 2012).

¹ The old poverty line applied for 2005-2010: poor households in rural areas are households with an average income under VND 200,000 per capita per month (roughly USD \$12.5 per capita per month); poor households in urban areas are households with an average income under VND 260,000 per capita per month (roughly USD \$ 16.4 per capita per month) (GOV, 2005). The new poverty line applied for 2011-2015: poor households in rural areas are households with average income under VND 400,000 per capita per month (roughly USD \$19 per capita per month); poor households in urban areas are households with an average income under VND 500,000 per capita per month (roughly USD \$24 per capita per month) (GOV, 2011a).

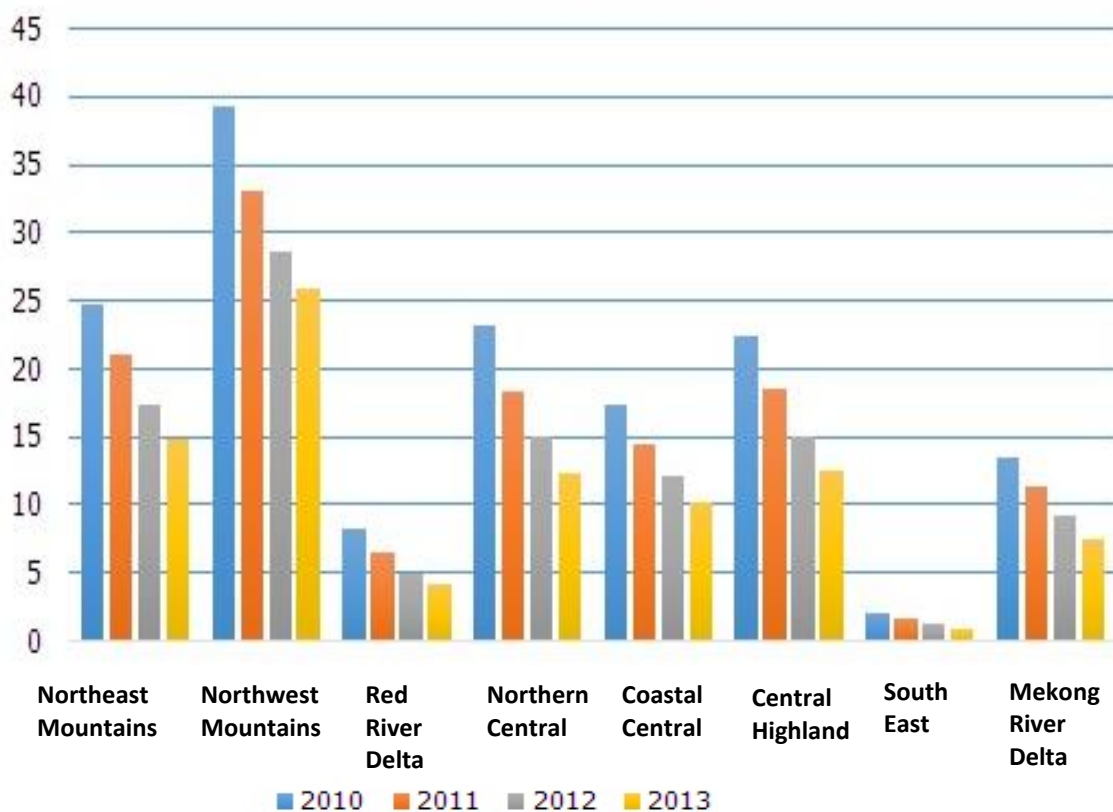


Figure 1.3: Poverty incidence by regions in Vietnam 2010-2013

Source: MOLISA, 2014

Moreover, the widening gap between the rich and the poor has also been manifested in unequal access to social services and rising inequality. According to a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report based on the living standard of Vietnamese families in 2004, the richest quintile received 45% of social benefits, while the poorest gained less than 7%. Moreover, the richest group enjoyed 47% of pension payments and 45% of health provisions while the poorest only 2% and 7% respectively. The education allowance ratios for the richest and poorest groups were 35% and 15%, respectively (UNDP, 2004). In a recent World Bank (WB) study, the result reveals that inequalities caused by income and social disparities lead to social exclusion and welfare gaps between rich and poor households, particularly between the majority and ethnic minorities (WB, 2012).

1.3.5.2 Increasing Number of Vulnerable People

As mentioned earlier, Vietnam has been facing an increase in the number of its vulnerable people. This group makes up a large portion of the total population, with about 28% of Vietnamese potentially in urgent need of social work services (GOV, 2010a; Tiệp, 2009). This includes nearly 4.3 million children in difficult circumstances, 6 million people with disabilities, 7.5 million older people, 300,000 people affected by HIV/AIDS (in 2008), 178,305 drug abusers, and nearly 10 million people living in poverty (MOLISA, 2009, 2010b).

1.3.5.3 Family Values and Structure is Affected in a Negative Manner

Vietnamese families have been strongly affected by fast changing life styles and conditions. The long-standing traditional family values cannot be maintained. Conflicts occur more often between family members, particularly between generations. Child abuse, child neglect, and domestic violence all help to create problems, such as children in conflict with the law, aggressive actions, criminality, depression and a high rate of suicide, and elderly people who lack family or community support (Binh, 2011; Hanh, 2011; Hugman et al., 2007; Lan et al., 2010; Mai et al., 2008; MOCST, UNICEF, GSO, & IFGS, 2008; MOLISA & UNICEF-Vietnam, 2009; Oanh, 2002).

For example, the first nationwide research on domestic violence against women, conducted in 2010, shows that there is a strong association between family violence and children's wellbeing. Children who witnessed and suffered from this type of family problem are more likely to have behavioural problems, such as signs of depression and anxiety, aggressive behaviour, and low school performance (GSO, 2010b). Findings from research on street children conducted in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City in 2005 found that a broken family is one of three main causes of children living on the streets (Hong & Ohno, 2005). The Peace House² statistics from 2007 to December 2013

² A safe house for victims of domestic violence and human trafficking that is managed by the Vietnamese Women's Association.

illustrate that family problems and violence account for 48% of women and children being trafficked and running away from families (Thúy, 2014).

1.3.6 Child Care and Protection

1.3.6.1 Child Issues and Problems

Vietnam has shown its high commitment to child welfare by being the first country in Asia and the second in the world to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1990. During the last 20 years, Vietnam has achieved substantial improvements in child care and protection (UNICEF-Vietnam, 2011a). Nonetheless, there remain significant challenges in promoting children's wellbeing. The first major challenge is the high number of vulnerable children (UNICEF-Vietnam, 2011a) and the increase in the seven disadvantaged groups (street children, children with disabilities, homeless orphans and abandoned children, children living with HIV/AIDS, sexually abused children, drug addicted children, law violating teenagers, and children working far from families). The reasons for the rise in the number of vulnerable children are the negative effects of the market economic policy, social and income disparities, rapid urbanisation, family break-ups, and the erosion of traditional values (MOLISA & UNICEF-Vietnam, 2009). According to statistics from MOLISA from 2010 to 2014 the incidence of children in special circumstances is estimated at about 18.2% of the total child population (MOLISA, 2010b, 2011a, 2014b) (this is detailed in Table 1.1).

The second challenge is child poverty. UNICEF states that child poverty is prevalent and severe in Vietnam (UNICEF-Vietnam, 2011a). The WB (2012), in its poverty assessment in 2012, confirms that child poverty is still a concern, especially in rural poor households where children suffer from both hunger and a lack of education.

Recently, Vietnam developed its own multi-dimensional approach to child poverty, based upon several types of basic needs: education, health, nutrition, shelter, water and sanitation, child work, leisure, social inclusion, and protection. In a study on multi-dimensional child poverty and disparity in seven countries in East Asia and the Pacific, including Vietnam, the percentage of children suffering multiple deprivations (of at

least one of the seven dimensions) in 2006 was 39%, and those suffering multiple severe deprivation (of two or more dimensions) was 15%, both above the average figures for the subregion (35% and 14.1% respectively) (Minujin, Born, & Dobson, 2011). In 2008, the rate of monetary child poverty was 21% and the multi-dimensional poverty rate was 29%. Furthermore, the statistics also reveal large disparities between regions and ethnic groups. The monetary and multi-dimensional child poverty rates were 5% and 13% for urban areas, and 26% and 34% for rural areas. Child poverty rates for minority groups were 4.7 and 2.8 times higher than the Kinh/Hoa (the majority and richest groups) (UNICEF-Vietnam, 2011a).

Table 1.1: Statistics of disadvantaged children in Vietnam

No	Type of disadvantaged children	Number (Person)	Percentage (%)
1.	Children in poor households	2,687,541	62.62
2.	Children with disabilities	1,316,227	30.67
3.	Homeless orphans and abandoned children	129,578	3
4.	Injured children	62,735	1.46
5.	Child labour in hard and risky conditions	25,823	0.6
6.	Street children	22,947	0.52
7.	Children effected by chemical agents	18,795	0.43
8.	Law violated teenagers (children in conflict with the law)	15,530	0.4
9.	Children working far from families	3,997	0.09
10.	Violated and abused children (*)	3,956	0.09
11.	Children living with HIV/AIDS	2,381	0.06
12.	Drug addicted children	1,067	0.03
13.	Sexually abused children	833	0.02
14.	Trafficked and kidnapped children	628	0.014
	Total	4,292,038	100

Note: (*) figure in 2008, others in 2009

Source: MOLISA, 2010b, 2011a, 2014c

The third challenge is the low coverage level of social allowance for disadvantaged children, with only 500,000 children in very special difficult circumstances receiving the monthly allowance despite the fact that the government and provinces have an increased budget for child care and protection (a 31% rise from 2008 to 2009) (MOLISA, 2011a). Moreover, the number of children who are provided with social services is still limited. Professional community-based services for those children are insufficient (MOLISA, 2010a).

1.3.6.2 Child Care and Protection System

The system of child care and protection has been established from the central to the grass-root level. At the National Assembly, the Committee on Culture, Education, Youth and Teenagers, the Committee on Social Affairs, the Committee on Economy, and the Budget and Finance Committee are the important institutions involved in child welfare. At the government level, MOLISA is mandated as the leading governmental institution in steering and managing child care and protection in cooperation with other ministries, sectors, and civil organisations. This system extends from the central to the provincial, district and commune levels (see Figure 1.4).

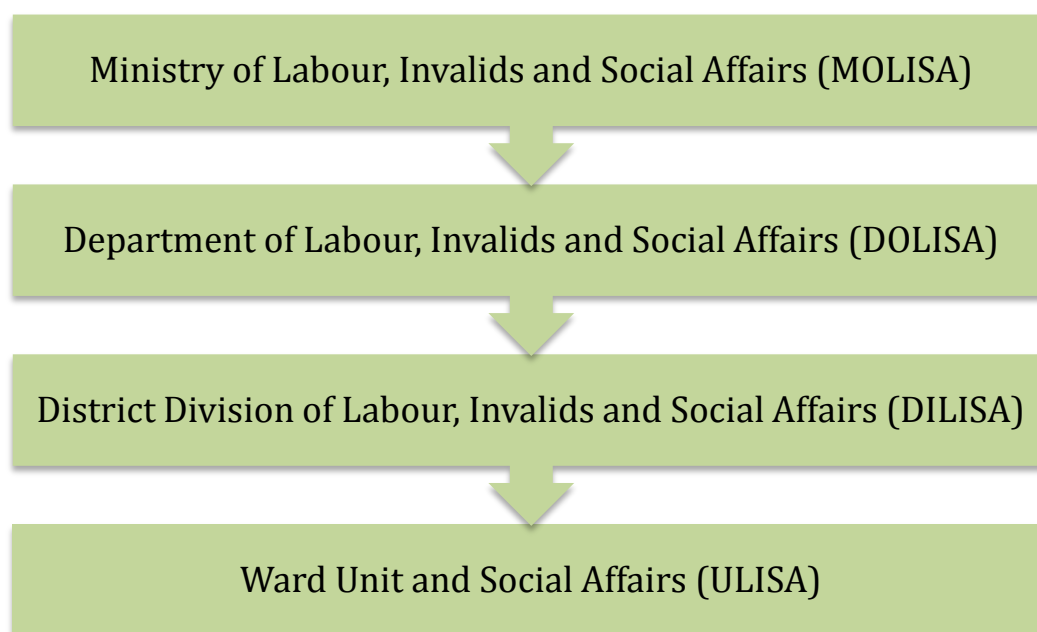


Figure 1.4: Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs organisational structure

In relation to the work force, within the field of Labour, Invalids and Social affairs (LISA), there are more than 12,200 staff and about 6,300 community collaborators who work as part-time local practitioners at communities working in the area of child care and protection (MOLISA, 2011a). However, there is a great concern over the professional qualifications of these staff. In a survey conducted by MOLISA in 41 out of 63 provinces/cities in 2010, there were only 23.4% of staff working in social work area who had bachelor degrees and 19.45% had no professional qualification at all (MOLISA, 2012a).

Civil organisations, such as the Women's Association, Youth Union, Fatherland Front Association, and the War Veterans Association also work side by side to support this system in the area of child welfare. Furthermore, there are about 400 private and public social protection centres providing institutional care for disadvantaged children. Although this institutional system has been working effectively, there is a need for greater coordination between sectors and ministries in response to the cross-cutting issues of child care and protection (UNICEF-Vietnam, 2011a).

1.3.6.3 Legal Documents, Social Policies and Nationwide Programs

Since the ratification of the UNCRC, and in response to emerging child issues and problems, the VNA and the GOV have issued a number of laws and policies. There are about 15 national laws related to addressing child welfare, care, and protection (see Appendix H). The key one is the law on protection, care, and education of children, first issued in 1991 and amended in 2004. This law clearly states the primacy of the principle the best interests of the child in all activities implemented by agencies, organisations, and individuals. It also defines the principle of the non-discrimination of children and outlines 10 types of fundamental rights and duties of children (VNA, 1991, 2004).

Child protection is also regulated by the labour code, the law on gender equality, the law on administrative sanctions procedures, the law on person with disabilities, the law on marriage and family, the law on prevention and combat against human trafficking, the law on prevention and combat against domestic violence, the law on adoption, and the law on health insurance. Additionally, the implementation of the various laws and social policies for children has been supplemented by sub-law documents. Between 2001-2011, there were 68 decrees, circulars and decisions on child care and protection that set standards, processes and regulations for child care and protection, mostly for children in difficult circumstances (MOLISA, 2012c, 2014f).

Vietnam has also initiated different national programs, such as the National Target Plan and the Five-year National Programmes of Action for Children. These programs are aimed at creating optimal conditions to meet children's needs, to prevent children from danger and harm, and to build a safe and healthy environment for children. The

current National Program for Child Care and Protection for 2011-2015 was the first program launched. The main objectives are: (1) to reduce the percentage of children in difficult circumstances to 5.5% of total children; (2) to provide 80% of children in difficult circumstances with caring programs, rehabilitation services, reintegration into community and equal development opportunities; (3) to discover 70% of children at risk and provide early intervention to minimise the number of children in difficult circumstances and (4) to develop and effectively implement a child protection system in 50% of the provinces and cities (GOV, 2011b).

In 2012, the Government also issued the National Action Program for Children for 2012-2020 that aims to fulfil the rights of the child. One of its objectives is to reduce the percentage of children in difficult circumstances to below 5.5% of total children in 2015 and less than 5% in 2020; to increase the number of disadvantaged children receiving care and to provide rehabilitation services, community reintegration, and development opportunities to 80% in 2015 and 85% in 2020; and reduce the child abuse cases by 20% by 2015 and by 40% by 2020 (GOV, 2012).

These national programs are important government guidelines that legitimate child care and protection programs from central to community levels.

1.3.6.4 Services

The main direct service providers for vulnerable children that have been established for a long time are conducted via social protection centres (SPCs) and charity care homes. MOLISA reported in 2010 that there were 537 public and private SPCs providing institutional care for vulnerable people, including disadvantaged children (MOLISA, 2014d). As illustrated in Figure 1.5, there was a significant rise in the number of SPCs in both sectors from 2007 to 2008 and a slight decrease in 2009 and 2010.

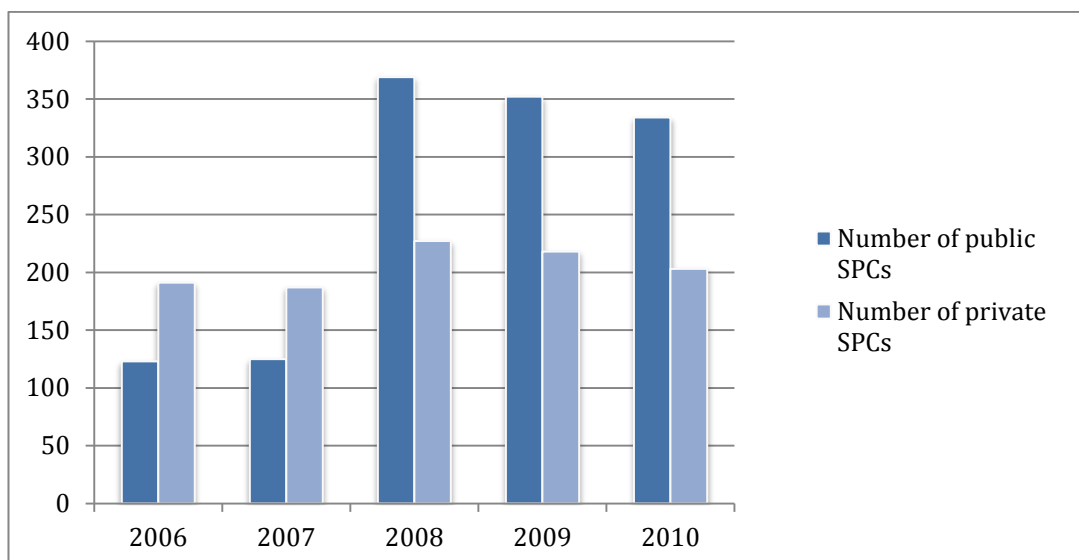


Figure 1.5: Number of social protection centres

Source: MOLISA, 2014d

Besides these centres and homes, vulnerable children can access ‘charity’ services provided by various non-government and religious organisations. Recently, more services have been developed to meet the right-based needs of these children, partially thanks to the support from international partners.

In summary, there is a highly structured child care and protection system in Vietnam that runs from central to communal levels. Moreover, the Vietnamese government has shown a great interest in child wellbeing. An increasing number of legal and government documents are issued to regulate child care and protection activities. The government has set its first national program on child care and protection aimed at the promotion of child welfare. Nonetheless, there are ongoing challenges: a lack of systematic child care and protection services, especially at community levels; a shortage of a variety of services that children and families can easily access; and a deficiency of professional human resources.

1.3.7 Social Work Development

This section briefly presents the milestones in the historical development of social work in Vietnam. It is observed that the introduction of social work to Vietnam was instigated through the West’s colonisation and neo-colonisation of countries in the

global South (Cox & Pawar, 2006; Healy, 2008; Hugman, 2010b; Midgley, 1981; Oanh, 2002) (see more details in Appendix A).

Historically, social work in Vietnam dates back to the colonial period, when Vietnam was colonised by France from 1862 to 1945 in the north and from 1862 to 1954 in the south. During this period, social services for vulnerable people were first brought to Vietnam by Catholic missionaries who set up an institutional care model to accommodate orphaned children, patients, the elderly, and the disabled (Lan & Mai, 2011; Mai, Lan, & Trang, 2010; Oanh, 2002). Many such care centres are still in operation today under the name of SPCs and charity homes.

In the period 1954 to 1975, the development of social work was reflected differently in the two regions of Vietnam. In the south of Vietnam, important changes in professional development were made under the colonisation of the United States of America (the USA). At this time, social work served America's political purpose for refugees in the southward exodus of almost one million people, mostly Catholic (Mai et al., 2010; Oanh, 2002). However, it laid a foundation for social work education. Social work training programs were built and delivered in a few universities and colleges in Sai Gon (now Ho Chi Minh City) and Da Lat City (see Table 1.2).

The north was under a socialist regime. During this period, social work was considered unnecessary in Socialist systems (Oanh, 2002; Yan & Cheung, 2006; Yan & Tsang, 2005). The government was in charge of providing protection services for people in difficulties. Mass organisations, such as the Women's Association, the Youth Union, and the Trade Union shared responsibility with the government to provide these services. This nurtured voluntary work and the social capital of people was mobilised and utilised effectively (Lan, 2010; Lan & Mai, 2011; Mai et al., 2010). Yet this created difficulties for the professionalisation of social work and for changing the perception of professional services which will be discussed in more depth in Chapter 6. The stagnation of social work lasted from 1975, when Vietnam was united, to the late 1980s.

From the late 1980s to early 2000s, together with achievements in economics that were brought by the Renovation in the mid-1980s, many social issues and problems

came to light. The need for to address those problems led to the reintroduction of the social work profession. Several social work practice and training programs were developed. Nonetheless, these para-professional activities were not officially recognised as social work services (Lan & Mai, 2011; Mai et al., 2010). This was partly because social work, being a very new concept, was not well understood by the Vietnamese government and people. Social work was understood as charity work, thus it was thought anyone without social work training could provide services if he or she has a good heart, free time, and other resources.

Moreover, most social service programmes were under the umbrella of social protection. Social services in Vietnam focus on two main aspects: (1) protection for the poor, the disabled, children in need of special protection, unsupported elderly, and people with HIV/AIDS, and (2) social problems, such as drug abuse and sex work (Hugman et al., 2009; UNICEF-Vietnam, 2005). Even though there were not many professional activities recorded in this period, many advocacy and preparatory activities were carried out with great support from IOs, such as United Nations Volunteers (UNV), UNICEF-Vietnam, and Save the Children Sweden (Mai et al., 2010).

The most dynamic developmental period of the social work profession has been from 2004 to the present (see Table 1.2). The year 2004 is seen as a stepping stone for social work education. In 2004, a training code for both the undergraduate level (a 4-year training program) and college level (a 3-year training program) was issued by the MOET (MOET, 2004). At this time, social work curricula for undergraduate and college level were developed and used nationwide (see Appendix B). They then were reviewed and revised in 2010 (MOET, 2010).

As shown in Table 1.2, since 2004 the number of social work courses has increased dramatically. By 2013, there were 37 universities and colleges providing social work training, and the number of graduates per year is now around 1000 (Hoa & Minh, 2012; Mai, 2013). In addition to this, social work programs began to be introduced into the vocational training system³. However, the rapid development in social work

³ The vocational training system in Vietnam is the same as TAFE in Australia.

education has also resulted in many challenges for professionalisation, such as the concerns about the quality of training, inadequate qualified faculty, and difficulties in field placement (Hoa & Minh, 2012; Hugman et al., 2009; Hugman, Mai, & Lan, 2013; Lan, 2010; Mai, 2013).

Table 1.2: Social work programs and training institutions

Time	Social work program and training institution
Before 1975	3-6 months or 2 years in Saigon in Caritas School and Sai Gon College
1992	2 year course in Saigon and a 4 year bachelor in Women Studies, specialising in Social work
1997	3 year course in Hanoi at the College of Labour and Social Affairs
2004	4 universities with 4 and 3 year training programs in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, and Da Lat City
2007	23 universities and colleges with programs for college and university levels in some provinces
2011	29 universities and colleges with programs for college and university level in some provinces
2013	37 universities and colleges with programs for college and university levels
	3 universities/institutes with a master program of social work
	17 vocational school programs in other provinces

Source: Mai (2013)

In practice, social work interventions and support activities have developed significantly, particularly from 2010. From 2004 to 2009, great efforts were made to advocate for the need for the social work profession and services in Vietnam, particularly in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. There was much fostering of public awareness of the need for and recognition of social work as a profession. 2010 was a historic milestone for social work professionalisation. On the 25th of March 2010, the government approved a National Project on the Development of the Social Work Profession 2010-2020, known as Project 32. This government document is evidence of the official recognition of, and a solid foundation for, social work development. The main objectives of this Project are to: (1) establish a legal framework for the development of the social work profession; (2) improve knowledge and skills of social work professionals and para-professionals; (3) develop social work services; and (4)

increase knowledge and understanding in society of the role of the social work profession (GOV, 2010a).

Following this government project, a job code for social workers, granted by the MOHA, was assigned to confirm the need for this profession in Vietnamese society. Three job titles are set with assigned job codes: (1) Senior social worker (job code: 24.291); (2) Social worker (university and college degree, job code: 24.292); and (3) Associate social worker (Technical secondary diploma: job code: 24.293) (MOHA, 2010). This created opportunities for social work graduates to be located in appropriate working positions. Furthermore, MOLISA issued another circular to set professional standards for each social work job title. This government document further extends the legal requirement for professional competence at specific levels of social work practice (MOLISA, 2010c) (see Appendix C).

In 2013, a professional standard for social work collaborators working at the commune/ward/town level, the lowest level of professional practice in the administrative system, was introduced (MOLISA, 2013). Professional services have been gradually introduced in many forms, such as social work service centres, community-based care, alternative care (adoption, foster care, social homes, and so forth), and social entrepreneurs.

Structurally, a sub-association of social workers was established under the leadership of the former MOLISA leaders in 2011, and formally approved in 2013 in combination with the Association of Vocations (MOHA, 2013). The formation of the Vietnamese National Association of Social Workers is a further step in the professionalising process that is yet to be achieved.

As such, after four years of implementing the National Project on the social work profession development, some progress has been achieved in capacity building for professionals and direct practitioners, the development of social work service centres and a number of alternative care models for vulnerable children, particularly disadvantaged children.

In summary, this section has presented an overview of the study background. Firstly, fundamental local demographic, culture, political, economic and social

characteristics were illuminated for a comprehensive understanding of the locality where this study took place. These local features were selectively presented to reflect issues and concerns in relation to the development of social work professionalisation and its services for disadvantaged children. In addition, social challenges and child care and protection were discussed to detail the challenges faced by Vietnam. Finally, it explored the historical development of the social work profession in Vietnam from the 1860s to the present. Social work has been newly reintroduced in Vietnam. However, it has achieved rapid and remarkable progress since 2004, particularly since 2010 when it was officially recognised as a profession. Being a very young profession, social work and its services are still being gradually developed and mainstreamed into Vietnamese society.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews international and local literature on international organisations (IOs), highlighting their relationship with the social work profession through their humanitarian, human rights, and developmental work, especially for disadvantaged and marginalised groups. The chapter begins with an exploration of IOs, including their development, general characteristics, roles, and challenges. The second section examines the relationship between social work and IOs by the way in which they support and collaborate with each other in the international arena. Additionally, an introduction of international social work is presented to describe the international work of the social work profession. The third section addresses the question of the IOs' status quo and its relationship to social welfare in Vietnam. Gaps in the literature are identified during discussions of the preceding studies.

2.2 International Organisations

IOs are classified as inter-governmental organisations (IGOs), such as the United Nations (UN) and international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), for example, Save the Children (SC)—a well-known child rights-based INGO, and the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) (Amadi-Coffine, 2002; Bennett, 1977, 1988; Iriye, 2002; Schemeil, 2013). According to Pease (2000, 2012), the idea of IOs probably appeared since the advent of the first modern governments from 1815-1822, and the Congress of Vienna—the earliest form of IGOs. Rittberger and Zang (2006) note that the presence of the concept *international organisations* in scientific discourse was around 1867, first introduced by James Lorimer who was a Scottish legal scholar. It was then used in Germany in 1908 and in the USA in 1911. Historically, the term IGO was attached to the Leagues of Nations (Armstrong, 1982; Bennett, 1977, 1988; Rittberger & Zang, 2006). Nonetheless, it was not until the aftermath of the Second World War, that it became widely accepted (Rittberger & Zang, 2006). Significantly, this term was officially used in the Preamble of the United Nations Charter that states “... do hereby establish an international organization to be known as the United Nations” (UN, 1945, p. Line 20). The appearance of IOs is seen as a prominent phenomenon of the 20th

century in world politics, especially in the second half of the century (Iriye, 2002; Wellens, 2002). IOs were conceived as the vanguard of the world government and were charged with encouraging international cooperation (Bennett, 1988; Rittberger & Zang, 2006).

In social work, IOs are discussed in the context of international social work (Cox & Pawar, 2006; Healy, 2008; Healy & Link, 2012; Hugman, 2010b). The UN and INGOs are delineated as actors that are contributing to the resolutions of international problems within a variety of processes (Amadi-Coffine, 2002). The UN agencies, such as the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Development Programs (UNDP), UNICEF, the United Nations Volunteers (UNV), the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the United Nations Women (used to be the United Nations Development Fund for Women), the World Health Organisation (WHO), and the other INGOs, like the International Committee of the Red Cross, Oxfam, International Social Services (ISS), Care International, SC, and Amnesty International, are amongst the most well recognised for their work in global welfare (Healy, 2008, 2012a; Hugman, 2010b; Midgley, 1997).

Generally, IOs have created their influential channels through national policy, research, agenda setting, and the development of knowledge frameworks, policy-based lending and project conditionality, and by establishing global codes, rules and norms (Deacon, 2007). The UN and its agencies have also been increasingly engaged in providing development assistance through bilateral or multilateral agreements in which NGOs are chosen to be the distribution channel (Healy, 2008). With these set mandates and roles, IOs, either directly or indirectly, are actively involved in providing social services to meet the basic needs of vulnerable populations.

The following section provides further details about the UN and its agencies and INGOs.

2.2.1 United Nations and Its Agencies

The UN, which was established with the signing of the United Nations Charter on June the 26th, 1945 by representatives from 51 countries, came into effect on October the 24th, 1945. It has become the centre of multilateral diplomacy in world politics (Healy, 2008; Pease, 2008, 2012; UN, 2014b). The UN, and its agencies, is viewed as a formal institution and the members are States; therefore, it is also called an inter-governmental or quasi-governmental organisation (Healy, 2008; Hugman, 2010b; Pease, 2003, 2008). Up to 2014, the UN has had 193 member states. Structurally, the UN is organised through six principal organs, including the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Secretariat, the International Court of Justice, and the Trusteeship Council (UN, 2014b).

The four main purposes of the UN are: to maintain international peace and security, to develop friendly relations among nations, to address economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems, and to promote respect for universal human rights (Pease, 2003, 2008; UN, 2014b). To achieve these objectives, since their establishment, the UN and its agencies have played significant roles in international social welfare, social development, and multilateral assistance. These organisations, taking social policy, development, relief and humanitarian programs as their main activities, have made an influential contribution to global development, especially in developing countries (Healy, 2008; Hugman, 2010b; Iriye, 2002; Midgley, 1997).

UN agencies, such as UNICEF, UNRRA, UNDP, UNHCR, UNFPA, and WHO, to name a few, have contributed to the promotion and advocacy for human rights, social development, and social justice across the world (Healy, 2008; Hugman, 2010b; Midgley, 1997). For example, UNICEF programs are conducted in more than 190 countries and territories and have brought significant changes to millions of children and families (UNICEF, 2013, 2014b).

2.2.2 International Non-governmental Organisations

According to the UN Department of Public Information (UNDPI) and Non-Governmental Organisations, an NGO “is any non-profit, voluntary citizens’ group which is organized on a local, national or international level” (UNDPI & NGO, 2014, para # 1). Defining them by their tasks, Fisher (1997) sees NGOs as “groups providing social welfare services; development support organizations; social action groups struggling for social justice and structural changes; support groups providing legal, research, or communications support; and locally based groups” (p. 447). International non-governmental organisations (INGOs) are identified as NGOs that are involved in a wide range of international activities. Their operations are aimed at promoting human rights, environmental protection, and humanitarian responses (Ossewaarde, Nijhof, & Heyse, 2008; Pease, 2008; Zhou, 2012). As non-governmental organisations, INGOs are sometimes named *voluntary* for their openness in admitting membership (Iriye, 2002), *not-for-profit* organisations (Fisher, 1997; Li, 2011), *civil societies* (Cox & Pawar, 2006; Iriye, 2002), or the *third sector* (Midgley, 1997). White (1986) points out that INGOs function as:

agents of international understanding, as molders of public opinion, and as pressure groups, both on the national and international level. Frequently, they are pioneers—the first to recognize a need, the first to do something about it, either in study and research or in a program of action. (p. 10)

As a part of the international organisation community, INGOs have also had significant influences on world politics through the roles that they are playing as advocacy networks, as well as policy implementers in partnership with governments and other IOs (Avant, 2004; Iriye, 2002; Pease, 2008).

The emergence and dramatic increase in the development of INGOs reflects their role as a solution to social and administrative problems, particularly in the context of changing interdependencies among the political actors, the globalisation of capitalism and power as well as the decline of the State (Fisher, 1997; Iriye, 2002). Moreover, “they would complement, substitute or countervail state and market organisations, thereby compensating for the state and market failure” (Ossewaarde et al., 2008, p. 42). The origins and behaviour of these non-profit organisations are the reflections of

both their incentive structures and utility functions, and institutional structures and state policies (DiMaggio & Anheier, 1990). Deacon (2007) stresses that INGOs are part of the welfare mix that makes up the agents of welfare provision and policy in many countries in the context of globalisation. For instance, the International Committee for the Red Cross founded in 1863, is an INGO with a long history which has made great contributions to international relief and welfare (Cox & Pawar, 2006). In addition, it is actively involved in providing humanitarian assistance and promoting human rights (Pease, 2008).

Being acknowledged for their contributions to global welfare, INGOs have *consultative* status in the United Nations and other multilaterals (Miller, 2007). The number of INGOs has risen dramatically from the first 41 INGOs in 1945 to more than 3,900 in 2014 (ECOSOC-NGOBranch, 2014). The 1970s was considered the great period of INGO enlargement (Iriye, 2002; Pease, 2003, 2008). This period coincided with the emergence of independent states out of colonialism along with the entire attendant civil and financial and political upheavals that occurred in many countries.

INGOs' internal structure, according to Cox and Pawar (2006), is organised variously; some are highly structured and others loosely organised. They have multiple origins, purposes and resources (Pease, 2003). Moreover, because they address various social problems and issues at different levels, there are different ways of identifying INGOs roles. Pease (2003, 2008, 2012) provides three interrelated roles of INGOs: (i) performing information-related activities, (ii) implementing welfare policies of IGOs and States in which these organisations are also seen as the *subcontractors* in providing welfare services, and (iii) encouraging international interactions, such as exchange programs, the conducting of conferences, and international cooperation promotion. However, in defining the INGO roles at the international level as civil society, Cox and Pawar (2006) summarise six main INGO functions:

- (1) mediating between people and national or global political structures, (2) reinforcing social ties between differing, and potentially competing, groups in society and globally, (3) the promotion of democracy or people's participation, (4) the reflecting and managing of pluralism, (5) the advocacy of the rights of the disadvantaged and marginalized or excluded, and (6) the presenting of needs and of alternative development models or strategies (p. 64)

Sharing the same view, Healy (2008) focuses on the various ranges of INGO functions:

relief and development, advocacy for causes such as human rights and peace, development education, exchange, international networks of social and youth agencies, the cross-national work of domestic agencies targeted at international problems such as adoption, child custody and refugee resettlement, [and] professional associations. (p. 123)

Although INGOs' roles are stated differently, humanitarian, human rights, and developmental work are their three main areas of work. The following section will investigate the three IO operational fields within those broad areas sketch above: advocacy, social policy development, and social services provision.

2.2.3 International Organisations' Fundamental Operational Fields

2.2.3.1 Advocacy

IOs have been well recognised for their impressive role in advocacy, especially in the human rights movement. It is important to appreciate their participation in advocating for positive changes in the life of vulnerable and marginalised people from local to global levels. For example, UNICEF is actively engaged in policy advocacy for children's rights and ending Violence Against Children (UNICEF, 2014b, 2014c). The UN General Assembly and other UN entities, such as ILO, UN Women, and UNDP are important advocates for human rights and gender equality (UNWomen, 2014; S. Wilson, 2012).

Working in conjunction with UN organisations, INGOs are also actively involved in advocacy work at various levels from local, and regional to the international arenas, particularly when they were granted a consultative status from the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in the aftermath of the Second World War (Libal & Harding, 2012). As Libal and Harding (2012) confirm:

A variety of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been at the forefront of advocacy for a more just global social order, tackling persistent social inequalities and addressing such macro processes as the global economy and trade, war and armed conflict, international migration, and the realization of human rights, to name a few important domains. (p. 311)

Evidently, NGOs are an indispensable part of human rights and development advocacy work. For example, Amnesty International is the best known of human rights advocates among INGOs (Healy, 2008; Iriye, 2002). This organisation has carried out

its advocacy role successfully in many of its programs all over the world. NGOs have also taken part in advocating for vulnerable people's needs and rights and can work effectively with diverse groups (Healy, 2008). Deacon (2007) asserts:

INGOs such as Oxfam, Christian Aid and Care International have come to assume importance within the global policy making process both in the sense of being policy advocates, often on the side of the angels arguing for improved international and national commitments to welfare and in the sense paradoxically of being agents for the delivery of aid and hence often substituting for government welfare provision. (p. 94)

SC has advocated effective national protection policies and child welfare reforms in child protection programs (SC, 2014). Other INGOs have been using public, domestic, and international pressure to advocate that governments carry out their international obligations (Libal & Harding, 2012; Pease, 2003; Zhou, 2012).

2.2.3.2 Social Policy Development

In the field of social policy development, IOs made gains in the area of developing global policies and in redistribution. The UNDP and ILO are among the UN agencies that have developed many global policies that address social issues and problems related to development. UNICEF and other UN agencies initiated the movement for equal distribution at a global level by opposing the structural adjustment delivered by the International Monetary Fund and the WB (Deacon, 2007; Hugman, 2010b). For example, in 2013, UNICEF was engaged in policy development in Serbia and as a result a patients' rights law was passed, confirming the right of adolescents (over age 15) to consent to medical interventions.

Other INGOs, such as SC, Plan International (Plan), Care International, and World Vision also place emphasis on social policy implementation and evaluation to pursue changes in structure and policy in developmental problems (Libal & Harding, 2012; Morton, 2013; Plan, 2014). Deacon (2007) summarises the various ways in which international organisations influence national policies including "research, agenda setting and the development of knowledge frameworks, policy-based lending and project conditionality, establishing global codes, rules and norms" (p. 24). He adds that INGOs also provide financial support for research and policy, which makes the

contribution of INGOs valuable in policy debates (Deacon, 2007).

2.2.3.3 Social Service Provision

Services delivered by IOs are numerous and diverse. For UN organisations, even though they have paid much attention to advocacy and policy development, service provision is another important focus. For example, the UNICEF has delivered varying programs for both direct services to children and families as well as capacity building for *bare-foot* services providers in Vietnam (Hugman, 2010b). In its 2013 annual report, UNICEF states that it has provided millions of children and their families with life-saving medicines, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene, education and protection in cooperation programs with partners (UNICEF, 2014b).

INGOs operate across a range of services from the micro level, such as ISS's family casework to the mezzo level of community work, such as Tear Australia and Australian Volunteers International setting up schools and providing clean water (Hugman, 2010b). Deacon (2007) acknowledges the importance of IOs in providing and contributing to local welfare. Oxfam is an example of an INGO that provides social services to enhance the welfare of developing countries. According to the author, the MDGs have propelled INGOs to take a bigger role in service performance evaluation and training local experts. He contends that a new focus on the public service element of MDGs might lead to a rapprochement between the more social democratic outlook of the campaigning face of many INGOs and their involvement in service delivery. INGOs also affirm their role in poverty alleviation, such as with social funds. Furthermore, they have been instrumental in setting up forms of service provision parallel to impoverished state services (Deacon, 2007).

Cox and Pawar (2006) acknowledge that INGOs succeed in services delivery in developing countries. Here, they serve a great range of vulnerable people, from children in need of protection (orphaned children, child labourers, street children, children with disabilities and so forth) to migrants, women, people with disabilities, people in poverty, children and people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS as well as communities in need. For instance, they describe the effectiveness of INGO participation in a project supporting AIDS orphans in Zambia, conducted in 2002, that

offered life-sustaining care and support for over 137,000 orphans and other vulnerable children. Another project offers educational, spiritual, financial and social support to more than 4,000 orphans (Cox & Pawar, 2006, p. 350).

SC and Plan are evidence of successful service providers. SC reported in 2013 that they provided support for health, education, protection, and disaster relief for more than 143 million children in over 120 countries (SC, 2014). In the same year, Plan reached 78 million children in 90,229 communities in 50 developing countries (Plan, 2014).

In short, a great number of activities are carried out by IOs to enhance people's wellbeing, ranging from macro level, such as advocacy and policy development to micro level of providing direct services for disadvantaged and marginalised groups. Clearly, IOs have been engaged and confirmed their roles in social welfare at local, regional, and international spheres.

2.2.4 International Organisations ' Challenges

This section discusses the challenges and criticisms that IOs, mostly INGOs, are facing.

2.2.4.1 Challenges

Klabbers (2013) states that for IOs, it is difficult to have the same sets of rules and doctrines that create privileges or immunity policies due to their various types, shapes and forms. In addition, the "identical structure and contextual constraints" create obstacles for the IOs' adaptation to change. Therefore, they have to compromise between "increasing autonomy and a long-lasting dependence on their constituencies" (Schemeil, 2013, p.220)

INGOs face the problems that have occurred in many other voluntary and civil society organisations (Fisher, 1997). Thus, they have to deal with the following main difficulties. First, INGOs that are involved in social welfare delivery can encounter many obstacles, such as the restrictions in accessing the population at risk in war, or from local opposing activities concerning reproductive rights, or as a consequence of threatening the state sovereignty in monitoring human rights (Fisher, 1997). So they

often face difficulties in providing sustainable programs rather than mere crisis services (Pease, 2003). Moreover, INGOs may have to challenge the state. Their autonomy and freedom of action could be restricted due to their *private* status (Iriye, 2002). For INGOs working in human rights, censorship from local governments limits their effectiveness, as is pointed to by Freddy (2012) who demonstrated that the Sri Lankan government attempted to prevent the human rights activities of NGOs and INGOs in this country.

Second, INGOs sometimes claim that they cannot always make informed choice (DiMaggio & Anheier, 1990). For example, in some cases donors may want INGOs to provide services for an unknown third party in overseas charities; or it may be in other situations that the required services are too complicated for the locality and as a result they have to lower the standard and accept the risk in maintaining their quality.

A third shortcoming of NGOs is that as they operate under contractual conditions as service providers and project implementers, increasing their dependence on financial support. This may push the INGOs to work for the state and this can have negative impacts on their link with the grassroots communities (Edwards & Hulme, 1996).

Finally, INGOs sometimes face dilemmas regarding whether or not to maintain their values as consultants, advocates, and professionals. As it is noted by Avant (2004) “taking steps with respect to security in particular may also threaten to compromise other principled commitments to non-violence, support for human rights, and other ‘global goods’” (p. 365). Therefore, INGOs may be vulnerable when carrying out their principled commitments if they are under security threats.

2.2.4.2 Criticisms of International Non-governmental Organisations

Fisher (1997) argues that INGOs, even when regarded as *apolitical tools*, serve development goals which are considered political matters. Development agencies and INGOs assist local NGOs in pursuing *new policy agendas* based on neo-liberal economics and liberal democratic theory (Fisher, 1997). Sharing the same idea, Barnett and Finnemore’s (1999) analysis depicts IOs’ diffusion mechanism of rules and norms as leading to what they call *good* political behaviour. They also debate that IOs have

the power to intervene almost anywhere in an authoritative and legitimate manner, particularly, when they claim to work for international peace and security. However, those terms cover their primary agenda to introduce democracy and improve human rights.

Fisher (1997) contends that INGOs convey challenges and transform the current relationships of power in a state. Whereas, Cox and Pawar (2006) censure the financial dependence of INGOs that may lead to bureaucratic structures and a change in their initial innovative nature in response to emerging needs and people's participation. They also expose the fact that INGOs are competitive with each other in order to get funding, media coverage, personnel, and improve their reputations.

The inability or unwillingness of some INGOs to collaborate have caused many problems in mounting an efficient response to a chosen need. In some contexts, INGOs can cause the *brain drain* of qualified public welfare personnel due to the fact that they pay higher salaries than local agencies (Hall & Midgley, 2004). Hall and Midgley (2004) note that the utilisation of voluntary organisations in the provision of social services in the South has not been successful. They worry about dependency on international aid making the voluntary organisations less innovative and responsive and serving the donors' interests rather than those of the needy.

Although there are many controversial debates and criticisms of IOs' limitations and legitimacy, these organisations are acknowledged as a necessary part of the global social structure. Moreover, the appearance of this force has brought about social changes both nationally and internationally.

2.3 International Organisations and Social Work

2.3.1 Shared Common Roles and Commitment in Global Welfare

Like INGOs, social work has played a significant role in promoting human wellbeing for more than a century. Originally developed in the West, the social work profession has entered the international arena and has demonstrated its effectiveness and efficiency in addressing many social problems nationally and globally (Cox & Pawar, 2006; Cronin, Mama, Mbugua, & Mouravieff-Apostol, 2006; Healy, 2008, 2012a, 2012b;

Hokenstad, Khinduka, & Midgley, 1992; Hugman, 2010b; Midgley, 1997). At a national level, social workers have worked with and supported disadvantaged and marginalised people and at an international level, they have been *advocators* for global social welfare and policy as well as social services for people in need (Cronin et al., 2006; Hokenstad et al., 1992; Midgley, 1997).

In the first definition of international social work, written by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) in the USA, the role of implementing international programs of IGOs and NGOs was clearly stated (Healy, 2008). The roles of the UN and its utilities in the development of the social work profession have been recognised (Hall & Midgley, 2004; Hugman, 2010b).

Both IOs and the social work profession are involved in relief assistance that provides immediate support to meet basic human needs, such as shelter, food, and water for people who have gone through natural disasters, famines, epidemics or earthquakes. At the same time, they are carrying out development tasks related to long-term needs, such as improving human development, the environment, and infrastructure improvement (Healy, 2008). For example, the UN and its agencies, INGOs, and social work organisations play a crucial role in the protection of internationally recognised human rights (Cox & Pawar, 2006; Healy, 2008; Healy & Link, 2012; Hugman, 2010b; Ife, 2008; Pease, 2003). Human rights are a core focus of the social work profession (Healy & Link, 2012; Rotabi, 2012; Staub-Bernasconi, 2012). The representation of social work in the UN and NGO committees and commissions is to meet the goals for human rights enhancement and social development (Cronin et al., 2006; Dominelli, 2012; Healy, 2008; Ife, 2008; Nadkarni, 2013).

As Pease (2003), Healy (2008) and Hugman (2010b) note, the areas that IOs deal with, such as security, development and human rights, advocacy, education, exchange and cross national and international related casework are closely related to social work. For example, UNICEF's efforts for child protection are of particular interest to social work (Healy, 2008). Claiborne (2004) values the contributions of social work to international development, policy formulation, service provision and advocacy. She sees the commitment to activities advancing cultural and racial diversity and helping

vulnerable and oppressed population groups as a common interest between NGOs and social work (Claiborne, 2004).

It can be said that IOs and social work share a common field of practice and have similar ideological premises in the global context (Cox & Pawar, 2006; Cronin et al., 2006; Healy, 2008; Healy & Link, 2012).

2.3.2 International Organisation Roles in the Spread of the Social Work Profession

2.3.2.1 United Nations and Its Agencies

Recognising the important contribution of the social work profession, many IOs have made efforts to develop this profession, through both education and practice. Healy (2008, 2012b) defines the important role of the UN in the spread of the social work profession worldwide. UN agencies are appreciated for their contribution of introducing social work practice, education and research in developed and particularly, in developing countries. The UN's attention to the social work profession is presented in the ECOSOC's order to the Secretary General to do "everything possible to obtain the participation of social workers in the preparation and application of programs for underdeveloped countries" (Garigue, 1961, p. 21, cited by Healy 2012b, p.61). Healy states that "when the UN was in its infancy, the Social Commission of ECOSOC encouraged attention to the training of social workers and provision of technical assistance in social welfare" (Healy, 2012b, p. 60).

UNRRA influenced the spread of social work in developing countries. It conducted social work education programs and sent social welfare experts to help other countries in the area of social legislation development and social service programs. This has provided a chance for social workers to engage in various international relief and rehabilitation programs where they are involved in supporting disadvantaged people, including children in need, person with disabilities, and displaced persons (Healy, 2008, 2012b). UNICEF is also very well-known for its work with children, women and the family, and has helped to promote the social work profession globally, especially in the development of the social work profession in developing countries. UNICEF and aid programs have contributed to the establishment of schools of social work in

developing countries (Healy, 2008). Other UN agencies, such as UNDP, UNHCR, UNFPA, UN Women have also carried out programs and projects related to welfare and social work, for example with: women, older people, people with disabilities, refugees, and people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS (Dominelli, 2012; Healy, 2008).

2.3.2.2 International Non-governmental Organisations

Healy (2008, 2012a, 2012b) acknowledges the significant relationship between INGOs and social work. She analyses the mixture of social work action in these INGOs' establishment and development processes and their contribution to international social work. She continues to confirm that a growing number of INGOs are involved in "cross-national social work, including international adoption, child custody problems, divorce and other family problems involving citizens and laws of more than one country, and sponsorship and resettlement of refugees" (Healy, 2008, p. 128). For example, ISS, the oldest INGO in the social welfare field, has paid special attention to cross-national case work. Healy (2008) concludes that the "social work-related functions of international organizations cover an enormous scope, and there are many such organizations" (p. 129). It is predicted that there will be a dramatic increase in the level of social work activities of INGOs in the future.

2.3.3 Social Work's Supportive Roles in International Organisations

Social workers and professionals have also contributed to the development of IOs. At the international level, social workers played an important role, after World War II, with social work present within the UN since its inception (Cronin et al., 2006; Mama, 2012). Leading social workers: René Sand of the WHO, and the president of the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW), Herman Stein, of UNICEF have been acknowledged for their contributions to the establishment and early work of other UN agencies (Cox & Pawar, 2006; Hugman, 2010b; Midgley, 1997; White, 1986). Mama (2012) stresses "the social work profession has a rich history of participating in and influencing the work of the United Nations and its affiliate agencies" (p. 118). This is confirmed by Cronin et al. (2006) that:

First and foremost, it is clear that social work has a direct part to play in the work of the United Nations. The issues and deliberations of the UN are issues that social workers have been concerned about since the professional's inception. (p.222)

Therefore, the Social Work Day at the UN was established in 1983, which aims to aware social workers about the UN work and their roles in supporting the UN to carry out the work, as well as to inform the UN about how the social work profession can contribute to the UN (Cronin et al., 2006; Nadkarni, 2013). In 2014, the 30th Annual Social Work Day at the UN was conducted with the theme: Social Work Partnering with the UN on the post 2015 Development Agenda (IASSW, 2014).

Not only involved in the formation of IOs, international social work organisations have also contributed to the development of important UN international legal documents, helping to develop global policies, such as the CRC and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Cox & Pawar, 2006; Healy, 2008; Hugman, 2010b; Midgley, 1997). For their contributions, the three leading social work organisations: IASSW, IFSW, and the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW) have had consultative status in the UN in 1947, 1959 and 1972 respectively. The ICSW is accredited with a *General Category* consultative status, which allows this organisation to participate in most aspects of the ECOSOC's work. Moreover, there are IFSW representatives at the Commission for Social Development, the Commission on the Status of Women, and the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, as well as other UN entities, such as in ILO Nairobi, UN-HABITAT. The IASSW also has representatives at the UN Headquarters engaging with specific NGO Committees on Mental Health and Social Development. These representatives' activities focus on international policy advocacy (Cronin et al., 2006; Mama, 2012).

The presence of the social work profession has also been noted in the non-governmental sector. There were many social workers involved in the work of NGOs at the beginning of this profession (Hall & Midgley, 2004). Payne and Askeland (2008) confirm the status of social workers in developmental INGOs, such as SC and Caritas in the South. Sometimes social work and IOs may be the same, such as SC, which was founded as a social work organisation by Eglantyne Jebb in 1919 (Healy, 2008). Furthermore, Libal and Harding (2012) notice the increasing number of social workers

in local and international NGOs, who provide direct or indirect services, work as community organisers, or serve advocacy and policy-making roles. Additionally, social work programs and services have supported IOs in successfully dealing with many difficult problems, such as poverty, refugees, and children in need of protection, women and victims of social and natural disasters. As many authors conclude, social work has brought *inclusion* for the excluded world population (Cox & Pawar, 2006; Healy, 2008; Hugman, 2010b; Midgley, 1997), which is the purpose of many IOs' services and programs.

Midgley (1995) emphasises the unique suitability of social workers to meet the needs of INGOs because they are skilled in collaboration and in understanding the policy context of services. Social workers in INGOs have engaged with a wide range of tasks, from casework, technical support, program management, research, training, community, and development to advocacy or policy planning. Their core role is capacity building for individuals, families, and communities (Healy, 2008). The knowledge and skills in community and social development, which have been developed in social work, are crucial in helping INGOs to fulfil their tasks and functions.

Nonetheless, relatively few detailed studies have been conducted on this issue. As Libal and Harding (2012) note "research on professional social workers' roles and the impact of international social work on NGO advocacy and service provision has been limited" (p. 315). As Hugman (2010b) comments, in social work research there is "very little attention to the relationship between the INGOs and social work" (p. 90). Particularly, minimal literature describes and analyses the social work services provided by IOs.

The only recent study on social work in INGOs was done by Claiborne in 2004. This research was conducted in 20 INGOs, most of which have their headquarters in the USA. The main purpose of the research was to investigate the presence of social workers in INGOs. The research findings show that 95% of social workers employed in the INGOs, in Claiborne's sample, who have a bachelor degree in social work or higher degrees, are in the positions of country program directors and coordinators (Claiborne, 2004). This result is the same as the observation of Kettner (2002), who pointed out that the common positions social workers hold in INGOs are as administrators and

development staff. This result reveals the possibility for social workers to take leadership roles in INGOs. However, the research discloses that a high percentage (83%) of the direct service providers are not social workers. In relation to the area of work, the research also presents a wide scope of operational activities: healthcare and economic development, community development and training or technical assistance, education, disaster relief and poverty, human and leadership development and human rights, hunger alleviation, social justice, homelessness, policy analysis, political activism, and research (Claiborne, 2004). Although there is a recognised connection between international organisations and social work in the literature, only eight out of 20 INGOs in Claiborne's study said they employed social workers.

The movement of IOs, albeit considered a Western phenomenon, has been increasingly directed to developing countries. The UN and the non-governmental sector have participated in the professional development of social work in many developing countries in Africa and Asia (Healy, 2008; Midgley, 1999; Reed, 2005) by planning and carrying out a variety of programs to help local governments and populations in need. However, more than a decade ago, Fisher (1997) argued:

There are relatively few detailed studies of what is happening in particular places or within specific organizations, few analyses of the impacts of NGO practices on relations of power among individuals, communities, and the state, and little attention to the discourse within which NGOs are presented as the solution to problems of welfare service delivery, development, and democratization. (p. 442)

To date, there is still little literature describing or analysing IOs and their provision of social services for disadvantaged people in the context of a developing country in Asia.

In short, there has been recognition of the relationship between social work and IOs, but most information was recorded in the early and middle parts of the 20th century. There is a paucity of international social work literature on the roles of IOs in internationally expanding social work practices to developing countries in a transition context, like Vietnam. Few studies have investigated the social work services provided by IOs indicating a need for more studies on this.

2.4 International Social Work

Since its inception, social work has been involved in international work and its nature makes it an international profession (Healy, 2012a). However, it started to define itself as a global profession in the 1970s, and the social work code of ethics is seen as its common thread (Cox & Pawar, 2006). According to Healy (2012a), the term international social work was first used by Eglantyne Jebb of England in her speech in the First International Social Work Conference in 1928.

According to Midgley (1997), the term international social work is used to connote social work's involvement in international activities (p.160). He further explains that international activities include international development, comparative social work education and practice between countries and international social workers' exchange. Healy (2008) suggests, "international social work is defined as international professional action and the capacity for international action by the social work profession and its members" (p. 10). She also identifies the four dimensions of international action: "internationally related domestic practice and advocacy, professional exchange, international practice, and international policy development and advocacy" (Healy, 2008, p. 10). More recently, Healy and Link (2012) define international social work as:

a way of looking at and appreciating the world (worldview), practice informed by international knowledge, practice, concern, and action on globally experienced social issues, participation in international professional organizations, understanding of the global profession, development and human rights, and a future and action-oriented movement for global change. (pp. 4-5)

Hugman (2010b) provides a critical analysis of international social work in the context of globalisation with four different visions of international social work: social workers working in other countries, social work with international clients, social work with international organisations, social work exchange, and practices addressing the local issues that originate in global systems (pp. 18-20). Cox and Pawar (2006) analyse the different approaches to social work in many parts of the world with a variety of focuses and emphasises: from the individual approach in America to mass mobilisation in China, social justice and action in Latin America, social development in Africa and social reconstruction in Eastern Europe.

Payne and Askeland (2008) identify international social work activities, that include: working in development agencies in the South; working in NGOs, such as SC and Caritas; working for official international agencies like the UN agencies; working for agencies dealing with cross-national issues, such as international adoption; working for international social work organisations, for example IFSW, IASSW, participating in international conferences, educational or professional visits, conducting exchanges and placements and research; working as a social worker in a country that is foreign to them; and working with refugees and immigrants in their own country (pp. 3-4).

Although there are some acknowledged successes in the international arena, the social work profession at the international level is faced with many challenges. Midgley (1992) warns of the diffusional tendency in international social work. It is the unidirectional diffusion from the more developed global center of social work to the developing countries in Asia, Africa, and central and South America where social work is just evolving (p. 23). This has not only created the imposition of inappropriate methods but also hindered the development of appropriate indigenous interventions, which will be described in detail in the following section. In addition, another problem that international social work needs to be aware of is over-standardisation that can hinder the ability to respond to local needs and professional development goals. Social work is also facing the challenges of the conservative attack on the welfare state and the associated shortage of resources, standards for the educational qualifications for social workers and social work programs, the search for models of intervention that provide an optimum mix in social change and direct services approaches to practice, low status and poor working conditions, and the role of social workers in increasingly diverse, multi-ethnic and multicultural societies (Hokenstad et al., 1992).

It is also important to note the challenge of the uncritical export and import of social work knowledge and practice that Healy (2012a) points out:

Within this context, international exchange has at times been characterized by unselective imposition and borrowing of foreign models of education and practice. Uncritical export of social work concepts and relationships based on superior–inferior status has created distrust of internationalism, much as the negative effects of globalization on poorer peoples and countries have created resistance. (p.13)

In short, as an international profession, social work is increasingly involved in addressing global issues and problems, particularly for vulnerable and marginalised groups in many developed and developing countries. Nevertheless, it is necessary to consider carefully the way the social work profession should be introduced in countries in the South to prevent professional imperialism.

2.5 International Organisations in Vietnam

The introduction of IOs in Vietnam dates back to the 1960s in the context of the Cold War when humanitarian missions were sent to the South of Vietnam (Iriye, 2002). However, most were introduced after 1975, after the union of the country. There has been a significant increase in the number of IOs from only eight UN organisations and 70 INGOs in the 1970s to 17 UN organisations and 750 INGOs registered in 2009 (Độ, 2012). The value of non-refundable aid has increased about 7.2 times in 21 years from US \$ 30 million (1975) to US \$ 216 million (2006). There is a large recognition of IOs' contribution to the wellbeing of Vietnamese disadvantaged population (NGO-Center, 2010). The following section presents an overview of IOs in Vietnam.

2.5.1 Presence of the United Nations Agencies

There has been a significant increase in the number of the UN agencies in Vietnam. UNICEF, UNV, UNFPA, the UN Women, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), UNDP, UNHCR, the United Nations Aids (UNAIDS), ILO, WHO, and the United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC), are the key UN organisations contributing to the social, cultural, economic, and particularly, welfare development in Vietnam. They have been supporting Vietnam to achieve the MDGs and the national development goals.

They work in collaboration with different levels of local administration, from central to provincial governments in many programs and projects at both macro and micro levels. They have been involved in various levels of working from legislative and social policy advocacy, and social policy development, to direct service provision through technical and financial assistance. Table 2.1 provides a more detailed description of the prominent UN agencies in welfare area in Vietnam.

Table 2.1: United Nations agencies in Vietnam

UN Agencies in Vietnam	Main activities	Areas of work/Programs/Project
UNICEF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - legal reform - policy development - capacity building - improving social services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - capacity building in child-sensitive law making, quality service delivery and improving the data quality - provincial Child Friendly Program - support program in health and nutrition, child injury prevention, water and sanitation, HIV/AIDS prevention - child protection and social policy - policy and legal framework of children's rights
UNV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - capacity building - human resource exchange - service assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - social work - vocational training and youth employment, and world heritage preservation - HIV/AIDS
UNFPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - legislative implementation - policy development - capacity building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sexual and reproductive health - population and development - gender issues
UN Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - capacity building - awareness raising - legislation review - advocacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - gender equality and women's empowerment for state management on gender equality - CEDAW Convention - female migrant workers through gender sensitive migration policies and programmes - gender mainstreaming in legislation review - HIV policy - violence against women - climate change
UNESCO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - capacity building - awareness raising - policy development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - community learning centres - HIV/AIDs - gender and education - literacy assessment and monitoring; - social and human sciences: promoting social science research, evidence-based policy making, and networking in social science education - communication and information: gender, media development, strengthening media education.
UNDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - legislation and policy implementation - capacity building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - poverty reduction - democratic governance - women's empowerment - environment, climate change and disasters

UNHCR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - advocacy - policy development - social assistant services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - protection: sensitive responses to mixed migration, registration, documentation, access to asylum, refugee status determination, and the promotion of alternatives to detention - rights of people of concern and for States' adherence - government ownership of refugee protection, statelessness and refugee protection.
UNAIDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - advocacy - capacity building - service assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - leadership and advocacy for effective action on the epidemic - strategic information to guide efforts against HIV worldwide - tracking, monitoring and evaluation of the epidemic and of responses to it - engaging other stakeholders in HIV
ILO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - policy advice - capacity building - technical cooperation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - labour market governance - employment and sustainable enterprise development - social protection and social security: child labour, equality and discrimination, and social security
WHO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - advocacy - capacity building - policy development - service assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - emerging disease surveillance and response - environmental and occupational health - expanded programme on immunisation - health sector development (including health and human rights) - HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infection - maternal and child health and nutrition - noncommunicable diseases, including health promotion, tobacco free initiative and injury - stop Tuberculosis and leprosy elimination
UNODC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - legal and law enforcement - capacity building - research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - drug control and crime prevention - HIV prevention, care, treatment and support in prison - money laundering - law enforcement - domestic violence - criminal justice - human trafficking and migrant smuggling

2.5.2 International Non-governmental Organisations in Vietnam

According to the Decision 340/TTg on Operational Regulation of Foreign Non-governmental Organisations issued by the Vietnamese Prime Minister, the INGOs are foreign NGOs, who are the non-governmental organisations, the cultural foundation,

research institutes, universities, the centre for education and training, associations and friendship unions which are founded overseas, including foreign and Vietnamese overseas come to Vietnam to carry out activities on development support, charity aid and not for profit and other purposes (GOV, 1996).

2.5.2.1 Historical Development of International Non-governmental Organisations in Vietnam

The historical development of INGOs in Vietnam can be divided into four periods. The first period started before 1975 when the majority of the INGOs worked in the south of Vietnam. From 1954 to 1974 there were about 63 INGOs (mostly religious organisations and from the USA). However, after 30th April 1975 they withdrew (Cường, Chức, & Tuyết, 2009; Độ, 2012; VUFO, 2003). The second period was from 1975 to 1978, which saw an increase to 70 INGOs with the aid volume valued at 30 million US dollars. Two thirds of these INGOs were from the USA. At this time, the role of INGOs was purely charity. Their main activities were providing medicine, food for the victims of war and natural disasters, building hospitals, and recovering and developing small-scale agricultural and industrial production in urban and neighbourhood areas, which covered 20 provinces and cities (PACCOM, 2008; VUFO, 2003). The third period was between 1979 and 1988. During this stage, INGOs were at their lowest level due to the embargo from the USA and other countries. Many INGOs had to close and some operated on an irregular basis. There was not much change in the role of INGOs in this period (Cường et al., 2009; Độ, 2012; PACCOM, 2008; VUFO, 2003). The fourth period is from 1989 to the present. Since the introduction of policy reform in the late 80s, the period from 1989 to 2001 witnessed a dramatic rise in the number of INGOs to nearly 500 organisations in Vietnam. From 2000 to 2006, there was a significant increase with 650 INGOs (PACCOM, 2008; VUFO, 2003). In 2013, over 950 INGOs were operating in more than 28.000 projects (MOFA, 2013) (see Figures 2.1, 2.2).

Figure 2.1 illustrates the presence of INGOs, which registered to work in Vietnam in three periods: before 1990, from 1990-2000, and after 2000. It can be seen that the greatest time for INGOs development in Vietnam in the 2000s was 1993-2003.

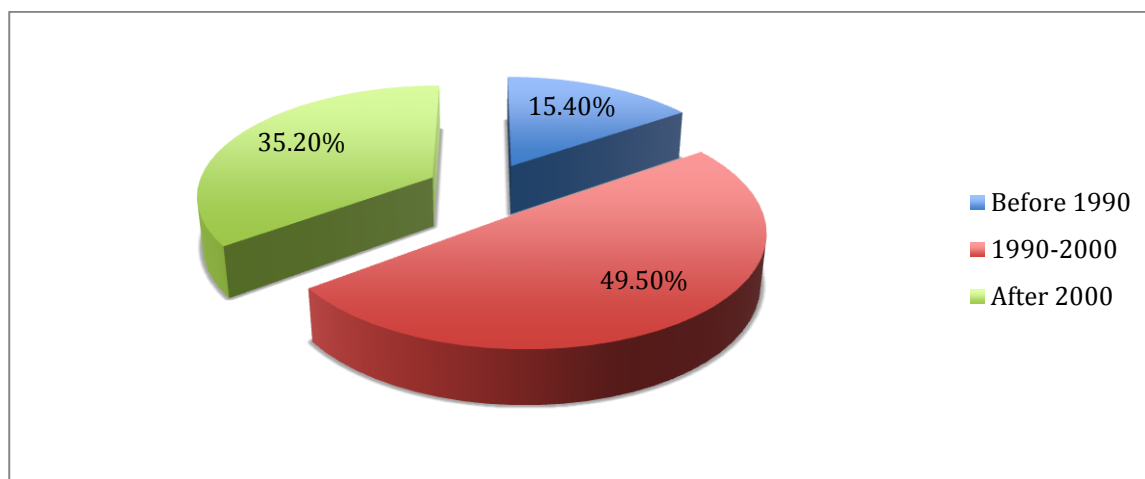


Figure 2.1: Percentages of INGOs by time of establishment

Source: VUFO and Institute for Studies of Society, Economics and Environment (ISEE) (2012)

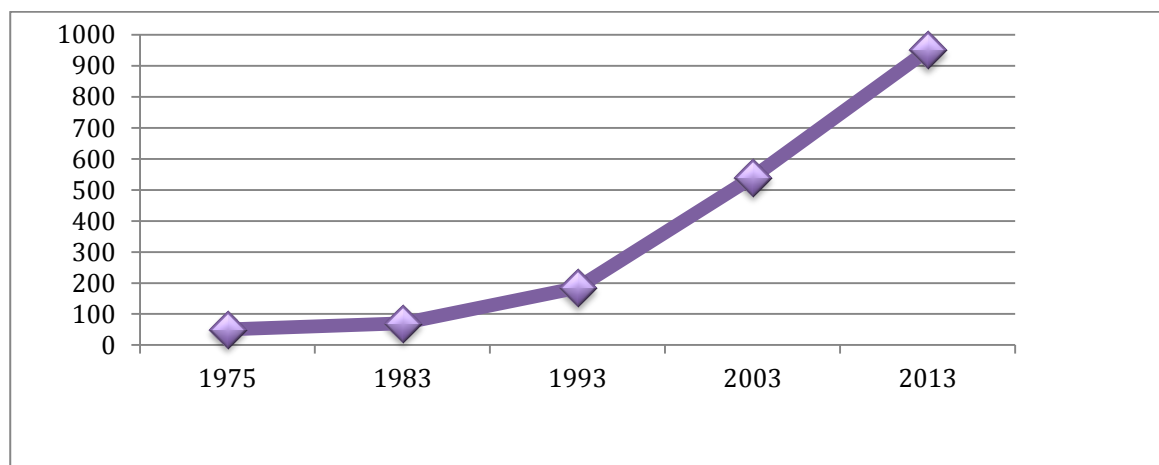


Figure 2.2: Numbers of INGOs from 1975 to 2013

Figure 2.2 shows the developmental trend of INGOs in the period from 1975 to 2013. It reveals a significant development of INGOs in Vietnam, particularly in the recent two decades. From 1993-2003 the number of INGOs increased almost three times (from 185 to 540 INGOs). This rise increased 1.8 times in the period 2003-2013 (from 540 to 950 INGOs) (MOFA, 2013; PACCOM, 2008; VUFO, 2003).

In term of the value of grants, the volume of aid from INGOs also takes off dramatically from 1993 to 2013 at a stable rate of around 2.5 times, despite the dramatic decrease from 1975 to 1983 (from 30 million to 8 million US dollars) (COMINGO, 2013a; PACCOM, 2008; VUFO, 2003) (see Figure 2.3).

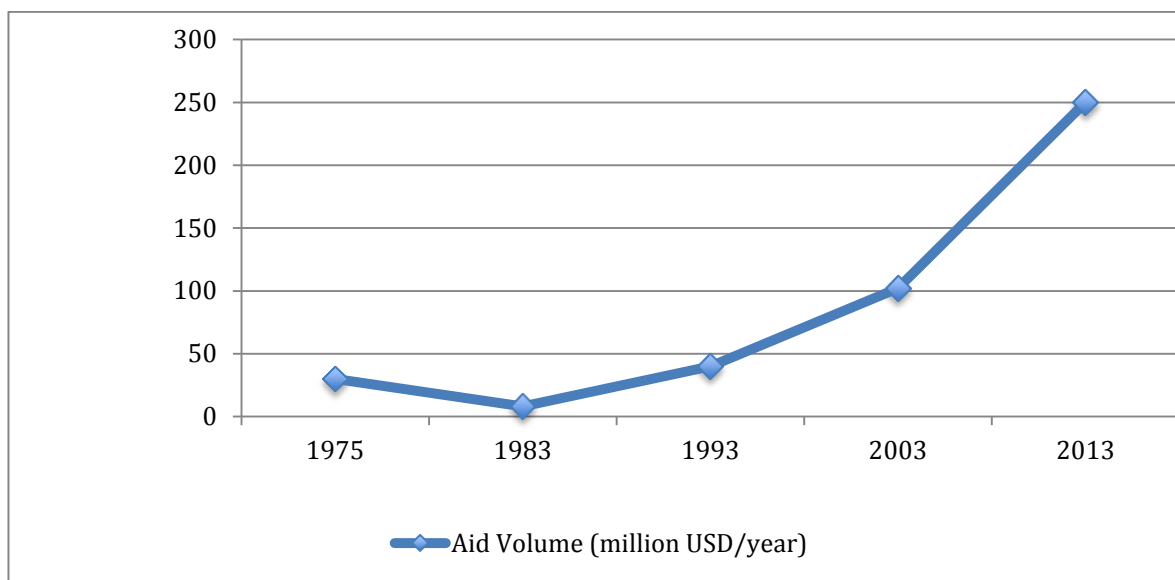


Figure 2.3: INGOs' Aid Volume

2.5.2.2 International Non-governmental Organisations' Areas of Support

In regard to INGO areas of support, their programs and projects focus on long-term sustainability in accordance with the Vietnamese economic and social orientation, poverty alleviation through a wide range of support programmes, projects in both technical and financial support, and direct and indirect services to vulnerable groups. There are five fundamental areas of support: medical care, education, economic development, social affairs, and emergency relief and reconstruction for those heavily affected by natural disasters (PACCOM, 2008) (see Table 2.2).

PACCOM's statistics show that in 2000, there were 1571 projects conducted, of which most, 26.1% were medical care. Economic development ranked the second with 24.95%. In third place, with 22.28%, was social affairs. Educational projects occupied 16.3%. And projects on environment and emergency relief had the least percentage of slightly over 5% each (5.02% and 5.34% respectively). In 2005, there was a change in the order: projects on social issues occupied the highest aid volume of 27.3% (PACCOM, 2010).

In addition to this, INGOs actively support policy planning activities, such as improving and advocating for governmental administration, policy planning, and proposing regulations and documents. To provide an example of the recent trend in

INGO operational areas, the researcher studied a total of 125 INGOs registered in the VUFO-NGO network by 2014⁴.

Table 2.2: INGOs' activities

Supportive areas	Activities
Medical care	improving the quality of health care, supporting in HIV/AIDS, and improving infrastructure
Education	primary education, education for children with disabilities, providing capacity building for teachers (English), and investment in improving infrastructure and studying facilities
Economics	promoting forestry, fishing and rural development: small credit and saving, comprehensive rural development, model of combination between agriculture and forestry, transportation, irrigating systems, developing small enterprises in localities, transferring knowledge and technologies in agriculture, forestry, and ecosystem protection
Social Affairs	building care houses, opening classes for disadvantaged children, providing vocational training and scholarships for orphaned children, training social workers, child care and protection, educating the youth about HIV/AIDs, caring for the elderly, operations for children with disabilities, social problem prevention, and helping the commercial sex workers integrating into community
Emergency relief and reconstruction	immediate physical relief of victims, reduction of social dislocation, reparation and improvement of physical infrastructure

Table 2.3 is an illustration of the INGO recent operational fields, which cover 19 detailed areas of support. The five top areas are: health, education, capacity building, natural resources, and community development. Child rights and children issues are at the 7th position (VUFO-NGO, 2014b).

⁴ These are INGOs registered as members of the VUFO-NGO Resource Centre, which was established in 1993 to serve the community of INGOs working in Vietnam and their Vietnamese partner institutions.

Table 2.3: INGOs' supportive fields

No	Supportive fields	Numbers of INGOs	%
1.	Health: (agent orange + primary care + reproductive + training and education + water and sanitation)	112	15.8%
2.	Education: (basic + inclusive + language training + teacher training + vocational training)	105	14.9%
3.	Capacity building	69	10%
4.	Natural resource: (agriculture + environment + forestry + water and irrigation + wildlife)	65	9.2%
5.	Community development	5810	8.2%
6.	Income generation: (enterprises + microfinance)	45	6.3%
7.	Child rights and children issues	37	5.2%
8.	Ethnic minorities	30	4.2%
9.	Advocacy	28	4%
10.	Gender issues	29	4%
11.	Disaster management	28	4%
12.	Water supply and sanitation	26	4%
13.	Climate change	25	3.5%
14.	Construction and infrastructure	18	2.5%
15.	Information and communication	9	1.2%
16.	Culture	5	1%
17.	Landmine and unexploded ordnance	8	1%
18.	War legacies	8	1%
19.	Age related issues	2	0,3%
	Total		100%

Note: One INGO provides one or several supportive areas

2.5.2.3 International Non-governmental Organisations' Target Groups

Another survey conducted by the researcher on the details of 119 INGOs registered in the VUFO-NGO network in 2008-2009 shows the variety of groups that those INGOs target (see Figure 2.4). The result reveals that children and disadvantaged children (street children, children with disabilities, trafficked, sexually abused and orphan children) are the biggest group with 49% of the studied INGOs providing assistance. The second group is poor people targeted by 24% of INGOs. Next are the people with disabilities (15%) and HIV/AIDs (14%). Minorities, women and trafficked women are at the same percentage (7%). The rest include peasants, victims of chemical dependency, victims of abuse, injured people, and burn survivors (VUFO-NGO, 2010).

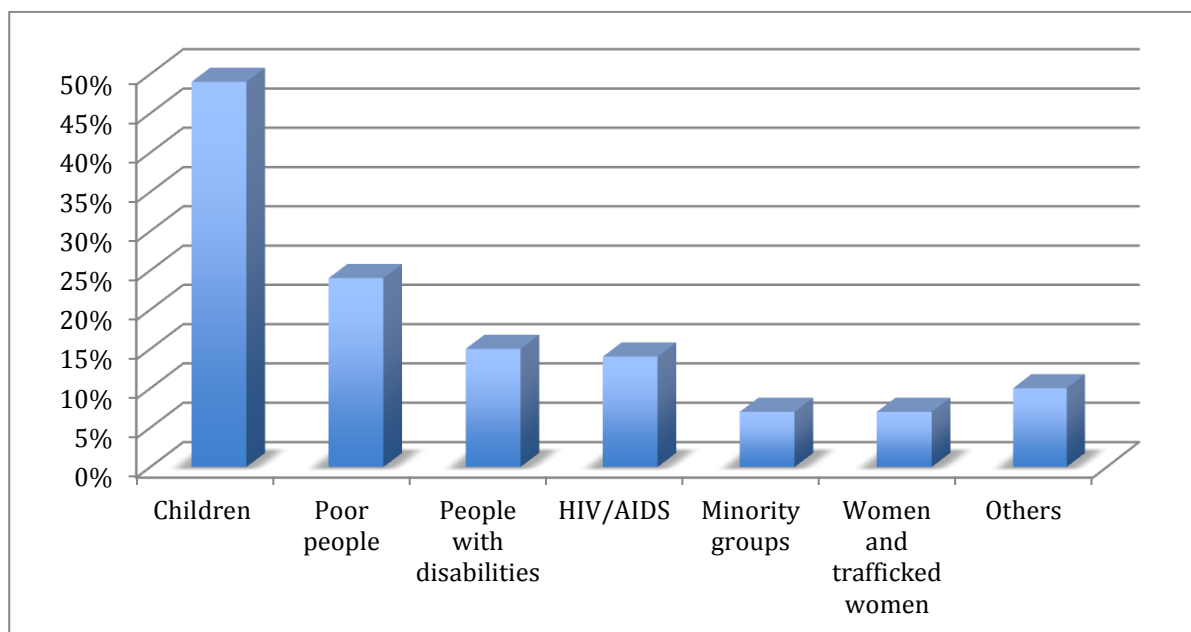


Figure 2.4: INGOs target groups

2.5.3 International Non-governmental Organisations' Management Structure in Vietnam

The government of Vietnam (GOV) manages the INGOs, which work in Vietnam through an administration system that shares the responsibility between the government and a socio-political organisation (see Figure 2.5). The highest state management of INGOs is the GOV and the Committee for Foreign Non-governmental Organisation Affairs (COMINGO) manages INGOs. This work is carried out with direct assistance from the Vietnamese Union of Friendship Organisations (VUFO), which belongs to the Vietnamese Fatherland Front (a socio-political organisation). At a lower, but direct management level, the People's Aid Co-ordinating Committee (PACCOM) works directly with INGOs.

COMINGO was set up in 2001 with the participation of key ministries and government bodies. It proposes guidelines and policies, oversees laws and policies, manages permits, and periodically reports to the Prime Minister on the operations of foreign NGOs in Vietnam (GOV, 2001).

VUFO guides and co-ordinates related activities of its member organisation to consolidate and develop the ties of solidarity and friendship. Primarily it is tasked with:

advocating and supporting economic, technical-scientific and cultural co-operation (VUFO, 2008; VUFO-NGO, 2014a).

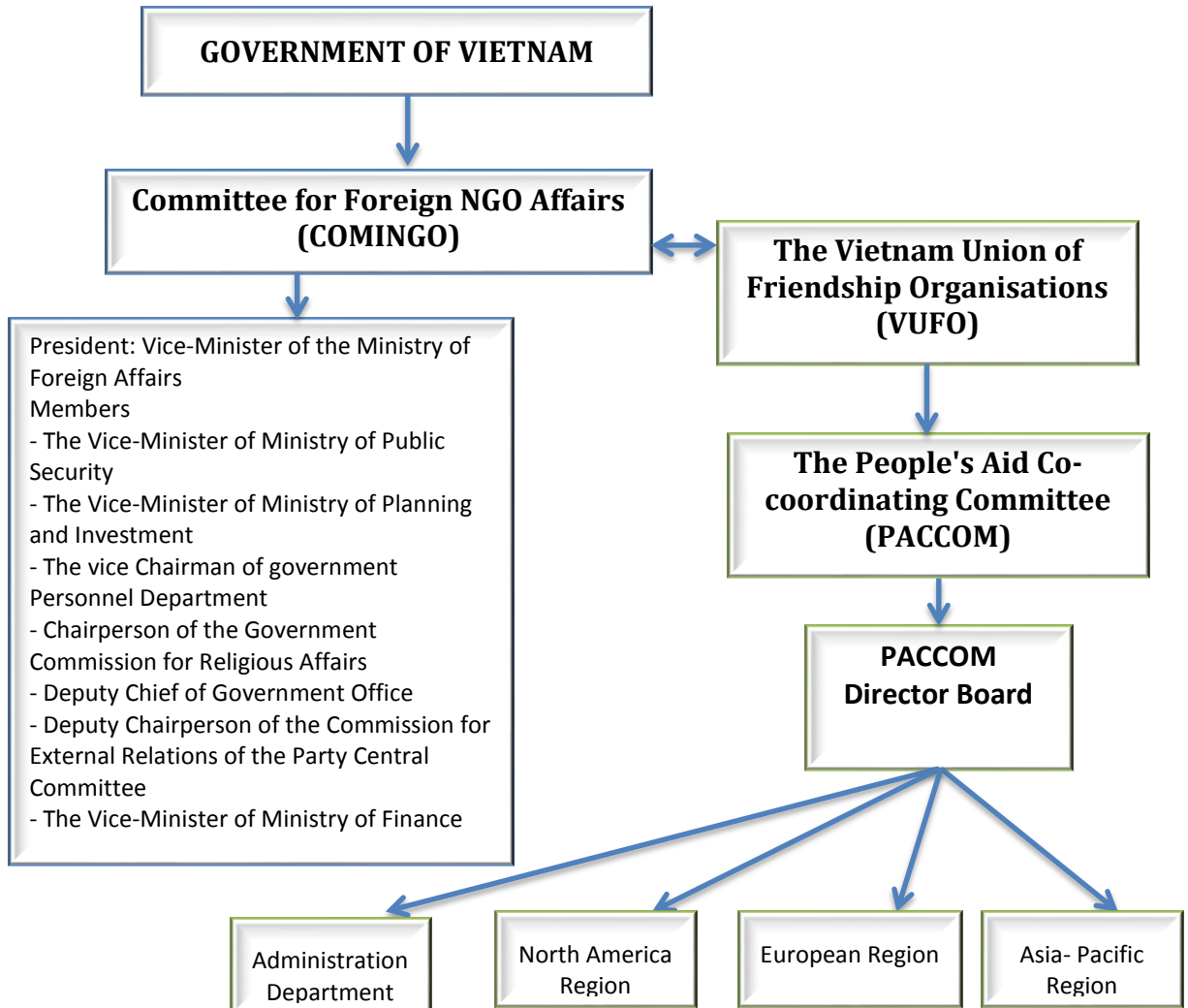


Figure 2.5: Organisational structure of the Committee for Foreign NGO Affairs

PACCOM, founded in 1989, has four main tasks: (1) to reinforce the partnership between foreign NGOs and Vietnamese institutions and localities; (2) to facilitate foreign NGOs' activities in Vietnam; (3) to gather and disseminate information concerning the activities of foreign NGOs in Vietnam; and (4) to participate, with concerned agencies, in guiding and monitoring the implementation of the regulations, laws, and policies relating to the operations of foreign NGOs (VUFO, 2008; VUFO-NGO, 2014a).

In essence, INGOs are managed and supported by the government and a socio-political organisation.

2.6 International Organisations and Social Work in Vietnam

2.6.1 International Organisations and their Contributions to Local Welfare

As was noted in section 2.5 of this Chapter, the UN, its agencies, and INGOs have made a great contribution to welfare in Vietnam. In the 3rd International Conference on Vietnam – Foreign NGOs Cooperation, in reviewing the contribution of IOs in addressing Vietnam's social problems, IOs' support was highly appreciated. MOLISA, the governmental body in charge of social affairs report during the past years this local organisation has established cooperation with many IOs in solving social problems relating to: supporting children in special circumstances, the elderly, people with disabilities, drug abusers, sex workers, women and children trafficking, poverty and unemployment (COMINGO, 2013b).

The Joint Statement between INGOs and Vietnam that was issued as the result of the 3rd International Conference on Vietnam-Foreign NGOs Cooperation in 2013 acknowledges the valuable support of INGOs in local poverty alleviation and sustainable development, and strengthening the local capacity in social developmental area (COMINGO, 2013c).

Although, as just discussed, there are numerous governance arrangements managing INGOs' work in Vietnam, research on the roles and contribution of these IOs on the local welfare development and, particularly, in social work professionalisation has not been examined critically. The following section discusses, in more detail, the situation of research on IOs and their relationship with social work development in Vietnam.

2.6.2 Research on the Relationship between International Organisations and Social Work in Vietnam

It is evident that there is a reciprocal relationship between IOs and the development and internationalisation of the social work profession recorded in international

literature. However, little research has explored this relationship, particularly in developing countries and in Vietnam (Hines et al., 2010; Hugman, 2010b).

Most of the studies on IOs in Vietnam focus on IOs' local administrative procedures and improvements. There are a few theses under the public administration field, which mainly study the way in which the Vietnamese government can strengthen its management policies and mechanism on the INGOs. For example, they are: "Strengthening the effectiveness of national management on non-governmental organisations' activities in Vietnam" by Loan (2002), or Thu's master's thesis "Finalising national management policy on overseas non-governmental organisations in Vietnam" (Thu, 2005), or others examining the national management policy on INGOs in some cities or provinces of Vietnam (Anh, 2008).

The most recent research has been on the cooperation between Vietnam and INGOs "The past experience and orientation for the future", that was conducted by PACCOM/VUFO and ISEE in 2011 (VUFO-ISEE, 2012). The main objectives of the research were to explore the difficulties and challenges of the partnerships between INGOs and the local governments, at both central and provincial levels in implementing developmental projects. The results of the research were used to propose appropriate solutions for strengthening INGOs' and local governments' cooperation. On the one hand, the research shows that INGO activities are effective and bring about positive changes for millions of project beneficiaries. Moreover, they have helped Vietnam to be more open and integrate into the international community. Provincial governments also acknowledge INGOs' important roles as well as their efforts in the areas of poverty reduction, and social and economic development. INGOs are pleased with the local coordinating environment. On the other hand, the research reveals difficulties, such as the limits in local managing capacity, the administrative procedures, and concerns about political sensitivity that prevent INGOs working in some fields and locations (VUFO-ISEE, 2012).

As was presented in Section 2.3 of this Chapter, international literature illuminates the symbiotic relationship between international organisations and social work. Since social work is a new profession in Vietnam, social work literature has been less well documented. The most available documents focus on social work education and

training and human resources. Minimal research has been conducted to study social work practice. As a result, little attention has been paid to social work and international organisations in Vietnam, despite the fact that IOs have been operating since the 1950s and they played an important role in the introduction of this profession in Vietnam.

On the whole, although IOs have been present in Vietnam for a long time and have made some contributions to the development of professional social services for vulnerable people, such as the introduction of services for disadvantaged children, capacity building, and the promotion of social work education and training by UNICEF, SC, Holt International, and Plan, to date, there is little work on investigating their roles and services.

Equally there has been little research examining these organisations' contributions to social work development in Vietnam. As raised by Hines et al. (2010) "the role of international collaboration in the development of the social work profession has not been well described previously" (p. 911). It is very important to investigate the roles of IOs in social work development in a developing country like Vietnam, where social work has been newly introduced and not officially recognised as a profession until 2010. Importantly, it is necessary to study the appropriateness of social service programs for disadvantaged children delivered by IOs for the local context. As almost all of these programs are borrowed from overseas where the social context is different from the local one, what is needed is to develop indigenous and authentic Vietnamese models for disadvantaged children based on the lessons learned from the professional social services introduced by IOs.

The next chapter addresses questions of how and in which way the research was conducted to fill in the literature gaps.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapters, the existing literature about IOs was reviewed, especially their relationship with the social work profession in the international sphere as well as in the context of Vietnam. This Chapter aims to explain the theoretical framework and methodological approach that were used in this research. The Chapter opens by identifying the research questions that need to be addressed. These questions relate to IOs and the professionalisation of social work services for Vietnamese disadvantaged children. The subsequent section discusses the conceptual framework, which was employed to reflect how the research problem was explored. In the next section, the research methodology is defined, explaining the reasons for selecting a qualitative approach, the research design, data collection, the sample selection, and data analysis. Lastly, the chapter discusses research concerns, such as the study's ethics, its considerations, and the trustworthiness of the inquiry.

3.2 Research Questions

This research seeks to address the three following questions, which emerged from the literature critique and the local context analysis. They are:

1. What is the relationship between international organisations and social work as demonstrated via their roles in the development of social work services for disadvantaged children in Vietnam?
2. How can such social work service models meet the needs of disadvantaged children appropriately and effectively? And,
3. To what extent can these models reflect the development of indigenous and authentic social work services for Vietnamese vulnerable children?

3.3 Conceptual Framework

3.3.1 Theoretical Framework

The research employed middle range theory as a theoretical construction approach that integrates theory and empirical research. This concept was developed by the

American sociologist Robert Merton (1910-2003), who proposed “special theories from which to derive hypotheses that can be empirically investigated” (Merton, 1968, p. 51). Thus, using middle range theory, which sits between abstract theory and empirical evidence, allows the researcher to explore the social phenomenon of the mutual relationship between IOs and social work professionalisation through an empirical study of the professionalisation of services for vulnerable children in Vietnam (Calhoun, 2010; Calhoun, Gerteis, Moody, Pfaff, & Virk, 2002; Dobratz, 2011; Merton, 1957, 1968).

Additionally, in order to examine this research adopted the interpretive or hermeneutic paradigm (Carey, 2009; Denzin & Lincoln, 2001; Phillips, 1992). The thick description in this interpretation is important for analysing the lived experiences of research participants. It also provides a better understanding both at the *surface* and *in depth* and at the *micro* and *macro* levels of the social phenomenon (Denzin & Lincoln, 2001) of professional service provision to local disadvantaged children and families.

Theoretically, the inquiry used globalisation, human rights, and the concepts of indigenisation and authentisation in honing the researcher’s ability to address the research questions. First, the theory of globalisation has helped to operationalise the local context in developing countries in the South (Hugman, 2010b; Midgley, 1997; Payne & Askeland, 2008). In particular, Vietnam is influenced not only by economic globalisation, but also by its social and cultural aspects. In addition, this theory has also provided an opportunity to discover the process of internationalisation of the social work profession (Healy, 2012a). This is especially important in Vietnam where social work is newly reintroduced and it is facing challenges in addressing new emerging social problems.

Second, being considered a human rights profession (Healy & Link, 2012; Ife, 2008; Reichert, 2007; Staub-Bernasconi, 2012), social work pursues human rights promotion and reinforcement in every area of its practice. Therefore, it is important to assess the development of social work services for disadvantaged children through the human rights perspective. This is relevant in the context of Vietnam as much as other

countries, particularly in the context of the non-Western culture. This will be further discussed in Section 3.3.3 below.

Third, since social work has been newly set up in Vietnam, its professionalisation is facing the similar issues and challenges of indigenisation and authentisation as other countries in the Asia Pacific and Africa. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate social work services for vulnerable children in Vietnam through its struggle with professional imperialism (Cox & Pawar, 2006; Healy, 2008; Hugman, 2010a; Hugman et al., 2007; Midgley, 1981; Tsang & Yan, 2001; Yan, 2013; Yan & Cheung, 2006; Yip, 2006; Yunong & Xiong, 2008). That is, it must respond to the risk that introducing ideas from other contexts may have negative impacts on the local context.

3.3.2 Globalisation

Globalisation is a contested concept, can be understood in a variety of ways (Beck, 2000; I. Ferguson, Lavalette, & Whitmore, 2005; Mendes, 2006; Sklair, 2007) and is defined from different perspectives. From the economic perspective, it is identified with neo-liberalism and structural adjustment (I. Ferguson et al., 2005) and trade or economic integration (McMichael, 2007; Murshed, 2002). Politically, this term carries significant implications (Mendes, 2006, p. 694). Generally, Sklair (2007) suggests that globalisation is studied using four approaches: the world-system, global-culture, global society, and global capitalism.

Beck (2000) refers to globalisation as “the *process* through which sovereign national states are criss-crossed and undermined by transnational actors with varying prospects of power, orientations, identities and networks” (p.11). From a holistic view, Midgley (1997) sees globalisation as “a process of global integration in which diverse peoples, economics, cultures, and political processes are increasingly subjected to international influences and people are made aware of the role of these influences in their everyday lives” (p. 21). Socially, Waters (1995) identifies globalisation as “a social process in which the constraints of geography on economic, political, social and cultural arrangements recede, in which people became increasingly aware that they are receding and in which people act accordingly” (p. 5). Similarly, Payne and Askeland (2008) denote globalisation as “trends in social change in the economic, political and

cultural relationships between people across the world” (p. 9). In addition, Therborn (2000) elaborates the tendency of globalisation to exercise a worldwide reach, impact, or connectedness of social phenomena and to a world-encompassing awareness among social actors.

It is important to note that globalisation is not just what happens in economics, but is also experienced socially and culturally (Sklair, 2007). Thus, the question of whether globalisation is *good* or *bad* is an ongoing debate. From the economic perspective, globalisation has brought positive results in economic growth and increasing global wealth (Dollar, 1992; Wacziarg, 2001). Dollar (1992) and Wacziarg (2001) argue that the rapid expansion of exports has resulted in a rise in the economic growth rate in Asia. Thus, globalisation can improve people’s wellbeing and living standards. In addition to this, it has also contributed to the improvement of global communication (G. A. Barnett, Salisbury, Kim, & Langhorne, 1999). The high level of technology has made people closer and set up interdependent relationship.

Nevertheless, globalisation has been subjected to criticism due to its negative influences on social and cultural affairs (Sklair, 2007). Through a welfare lens, Mendes (2006) argues that the *hyper-global* thesis sees globalisation as systematically transferring power from national governments to uncontrollable market forces, leading to the decline of the welfare state. In contrast, the *mediation* thesis acknowledges the impact of globalisation on the welfare state; however, it argues that the impact varies from country to country. In regard to the global change in culture, Payne and Askeland (2009) analyse the influences of globalisation, post-colonialism, and postmodernism by the way in which these processes strengthen the dominance of Western cultural influence on other cultures, including changes in the knowledge and understanding of people and societies (p.9). Furthermore, Sklair (2007) analysed globalisation under the model of global culture and concluded that it created a *global village* (p. 238), which assimilates cultures.

The social work profession cannot be considered separately from the real context in which globalisation increasingly influences every aspect of people’s wellbeing. As stated by Hugman (2010b), “the actions of social work are contextualized by the impact of economic, political and cultural globalization” (p. 6). Hence, the theory of

globalisation needs to be examined as it “provides the context within which social work is practised in the early twenty-first century” (Ife, 2008, p. 20). According to Tsang and Yan (2001), the contemporary globalisation provides the social work professional “a huge market in the developing countries” (p. 433).

Dominelli (2010a) also analyses the interrelationship between globalisation and the internationalisation of social problems. According to her, globalisation and neo-liberalism have made professional social work more complex (Dominelli, 2010b). For example, children are variously considered as either the consumers or victims of global economic forces and media influences (Smith, 2004). He notes:

... children, in particular, are increasingly experiencing the effects of *global transitions*, some of which are specifically directed towards them, such as marketing messages, whilst they will experience others in a manner unique to them, such as family change and disruption. (Smith, 2004, p. 73)

Ultimately, from a globalisation perspective, it is important to view the relationship between social work and IOs, which includes the process of the introduction of social work, a Western profession, into developing countries like Vietnam. In addition, in the light of the local context, theories of globalisation will provide a critical reflection on the increasing social problems of disparity and the rising level of vulnerability which the young, Vietnamese social work profession is addressing (Hugman et al., 2009; Lan et al., 2013b; Lan et al., 2010).

Generally, in relation to the social work profession, globalisation brings both challenges and opportunities. Despite its negative impacts on global social life and global problems, globalisation has created opportunities for the social work profession in social welfare and exchange as well as mutual problem solving and shared problems (Healy, 2008, 2012a). Healy (2008), states that: “globalization is also directly evident in the social welfare issues that are the focus of social work professional responsibility” (p. 40). It is, consequently, worth exploring how globalisation influences the internationalisation of the social work profession in Vietnam.

3.3.3 Human Rights

The universal human rights convention was officially endorsed by the UN General Assembly in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in Paris on December

10, 1948, with no dissent (UN, 2014a; Wronka, 2012). Articles 1 and 2 of the UDHR confirm that “all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights” (Article 1), and “everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms ... without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status” (Article 2) (UN, 1948). The UDHR covers five key concepts: human dignity, non-discrimination, civil and political rights, economic, social, and cultural rights, and solidarity rights (Wronka, 2012). Staub-Bernasconi (2012) states:

Historically and culturally, human rights, their invocation, and the further development of their philosophical, religious, ethical, and political movements are answers to experiences of injustice, the extreme powerlessness of individuals, groups, or members of social categories (minorities) to change their situation. (p. 31)

According to Ife (2008), the historical development of human rights can be divided into three generations. The first generation, which originated in the eighteenth century, is considered as one of negative rights. It is criticised for being Western dominated with a focus on prevention and protection rather than positive provision and realisation. The second generation, which stemmed from social democracy/socialism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, is represented in various forms of social provision or services to realise the full potential of human beings. These include: social security rights, respect with dignity, and the right to recreation and leisure time. The third generation, which developed over the last three decades, is based on the collective level (rights belong to a community, population, society and nation). This generation was born in response to the criticism from Asia and Africa that the construction of human rights was based on individualisation and has a western liberal base. It is seen as more relevant to the Asian culture of Confucianism, where families not just individuals are central to society (Ife, 2008, p. 31).

To be seen as a human rights profession (Healy & Link, 2012; Ife, 2008; Reichert, 2007; Staub-Bernasconi, 2012; Wronka, 2012), it is necessary to take into account the human rights perspective when conducting research on social services for vulnerable people. Ife (2008) emphasised that human rights are “particularly important for those in the human service professions in general, and for social workers in particular” and

precisely, “the moral reference point” for the “values of humanity” in the contemporary world (p. 1). For social workers, human rights serve as the moral basis of their practice in every aspect of work: from the micro level, such as direct work with clients, to the mezzo work with community development and the macro levels of policy advocacy. Moreover, human rights play a crucial role in strengthening the practice of social work: meeting the goals of social justice.

The most concerning issue in human rights discourse, an issue which is raised by many scholars from various fields, such as law, social policy, politics, and social work, is the notion of universalism versus relativism. The central debate is about whether the idea of universal human rights, which is mostly based on Western and Christian values, is applicable to non-Western cultures, such as Islamic, Asian or other cultures of the third world (Arnold, 2012; Baderin, 2001; Halliday, 1995; Kielsgard, 2011; Reichert, 2011; Rentein, 1990). The theory of universalism understands that “human rights are the same everywhere both in substance and application” (Baderin, 2001, p. 6). In contrast, cultural relativism refers to a view that all cultures are equal and universal values become secondary when examining cultural norms and “no outside value is superior to that of the local culture” (Reichert, 2011, p. 215).

Therefore, it is important for social workers to understand these two underlying key concepts in human rights’ application (Reichert, 2011) in order to have appropriate practices. Reichert points out the problem of an uncritical acceptance of culture over universal human rights principles—a concern that social workers should take into consideration in professional practice.

Taking a human rights perspective, it is important that the services for disadvantaged children need to be assessed based on child rights. Notably, Vietnam was the first country in Asia and the second country in the world which ratified the CRC in 1990 (UNICEF-Vietnam, 2011b). As is stated by Link (2012), the CRC is “a powerful template for human services concerned with families and their children” (p. 459). It is one of the eight human rights conventions, first drafted by Eglantyne Jebb, a social worker, in 1923 later becoming known as the Declaration of the Rights of the Child in 1959 (Healy, 2008, p. 170). It was finally adopted by the UN General Assembly

on November the 20th, 1989 and became legally binding in September 1990 (UNICEF, 2014a).

The CRC consists of 54 articles based on four principles: (i) survival, development and protection, (ii) the best interests of the child, (iii) non-discrimination, and (iv) participation. The first principle requires the authorities in member countries to protect children and ensure their full development in physical, spiritual, moral, and social aspects. The second notes that the legal documents and activities that affect children should put this principle first and benefit children in the best possible way. This is strongly related to the social work principle of the best interests for clients. The third standard means that children should neither benefit nor suffer because of their race, colour, gender, language, religion, or national, social or ethnic origin, or because of any political or other opinion. Finally, the participation principle states the rights of children to a voice in any decisions that affect them and that children's opinions have to be taken into account (UNICEF-Vietnam, 2011b).

Fifty-four articles in CRC are clustered into seven groups, which are: (1) built-in cooperation, (2) survival and healthy development, (3) civil rights, (4) parent responsibility and pattern of care (alternative care and international adoption), (5) health and wellbeing, (6) education, leisure and culture, and (7) risks for children crossing borders and young people who are exposed to the aftermath of political and social upheaval or war rules for children (Link, 2012, pp. 453-454). Thus, for Link (2012), how well social workers are aware of the CRC will guide their work with children appropriately and effectively.

3.3.4 Social Work Indigenisation and Authentisation

For more than a century of development, the social work profession has been expanding its coverage and influence to many parts of the world. Since the 1970s, indigenisation and the authentisation of social work has garnered significant attention and concern, particularly with its internationalisation to non-Eurocentric cultures and developing countries in Latin America, Africa, and Asia (see for example Midgley (1981, 1995), Healy (2008, 2012a), Cox and Pawar (2006), Gray (2005, 2010), Gray and Coates (2010), Gray, Coates, and Bird (2008), Coates, Gray, and Hetherington (2006), Hugman

(2010b)). This is especially so among scholars from Asia and other non-Western countries: Mui Chung Yan (1998, 2013) and his work with A. Ka Tat Tsang (2001, 2005, 2008) and Kwok Wah Chueng (2006), Yip Kam Shing (2005b, 2006), Huang Yunong and Zhang Xiong (2008, 2012), Law Kam Yee and Lee Kim Ming (2014), Jayashree Nimmagadda and Charles D. Cowger (1999), and Ronald G. Walton and Medhat M. Abo El Nasr (1988).

It is observed that social work's introduction is closely tied to the colonisation process. (Cox & Pawar, 2006; Healy, 2008, 2012a; Hugman, 2010b; Midgley, 1981), All scholars emphasise the process of *exporting* social work from metropolitan countries (the US and the UK) via colonial and neo-colonial social welfare systems to many other parts in the world, particularly to developing countries. Social welfare services were introduced and influenced by the colonial power (Cox & Pawar, 2006; Midgley, 1995). Cox and Pawar (2006) argue that: "social work accompanied colonialism essentially to meet the needs and aspirations of the colonial powers, rather than to allow social work to make a contribution to these countries' development" (p. 5). According to Hugman (2010b), in post-colonial settings social work has struggled between the "processes of modernization and a critical rejection of the dominance of Western influences" (p. 4).

Therefore, the ideas of indigenisation and authentisation become a central debate in phase three of the international social work movement from the 1970s to 1990s (Yip, 2006). Recently, it has become an increasing concern in China (Yan & Cheung, 2006; Yip, 2006). Midgley (1981) introduced the concept of *professional imperialism* in social work in relation to its transition from developed countries to developing or Third world countries. He blames professional imperialism for the uncritical replication of Western social work in developing countries. Historically, the concept of indigenisation appeared in academia in Latin America as a result of social workers' disillusionment with Western theories and practice (K. M. Ferguson, 2005). Midgley (1981) defines indigenisation as "appropriateness" and argues that "professional social work roles must be appropriate to the needs of different countries and social work education must be appropriate to the demands of social work practice" (p. 170). Hugman (2010b) provides a comprehensive and clear concept of indigenisation. In his view,

“indigenization refers to the adoption and adaptation of theories and practices in social work in ways that are relevant to the local context” (Hugman, 2010b, p. 138). Similarly, K. M. Ferguson (2005) describes this concept as “a process through which a recipient country experiences discontent with the imported western model of social work in the context of the local political, economic, social and cultural structures” (p. 520). Taking a serious view on the application of indigenisation in China under the Bernstein's recontextualisation theory, Yan and Cheung (2006) contend that indigenisation “is a political process, in which competing social forces try to dominate the recontextualization of an imported discourse, and that it is necessary to understand how these forces interact” (p.77).

Based on an analysis on the current trends of indigenisation, Yip (2006) suggests for a tri-dimensional model, which includes universality- specificity, dominance-minority, and tradition-present situation. For him, this model can address the three challenges in indigenisation: “the diversity of social, cultural, and political contexts in each society”, “the complexity of indigenized cultures, traditions, languages, and customs”, and “dynamic changes in clients' needs, difficulties, and psychosocial environment” as partially consequence of globalisation (Yip, 2006, p. 53).

Critically analysing the current normative understanding of indigenisation that focuses on Western social work culture and values, Yan (2013) proposes a *Pragmatic Approach*. This model aims at providing a practical and feasible framework for social work indigenisation in receiving countries. Taking the process of social work development as China is a demonstration for his model, Yan (2013) concludes that the pragmatic approach “implies an indigenized social work model that is a functional mixture of knowledge, values and skills adapted from imported models, local traditional practice, and emerging practice” (p. 19).

Claiming that indigenisation literature focuses more on an international level, Law and Lee (2014) see indigenisation, in the context of social work practice for minority groups in Hong Kong, as “the development of culturally relevant social work for a particular group of the population” (p.4). They have provided five precautions based on their research in imported Western values versus indigenisation. These are: being

aware of not treating the imported Western values and practice as the end; not precluding the participation of ethnic groups in developing their own social work practice; preventing the essentialisation of ethnicity and culture; encouraging two-way dynamic interaction and mutual respect between ethnic groups; and avoiding the risk of causing “new inequity” in the relationship between locally oppressed ethnic groups and social workers and activists (Law & Lee, 2004, p.11).

Conceptually, authentisation is mentioned in relation to indigenisation. According to Hugman (2010b) it refers to “a process of developing theories and practices for social work which are derived out of the realities of the local context” (p. 138). This definition is expanded by Law and Lee (2014):

Authentization, which refers to the process of building up a domestic social work model that genuinely takes root in the local social, political, economic, and cultural contexts, was regarded as an important indigenization aspect to counter the potential professional imperialism embedded within the imported Western social work values and practice. (p. 3)

In relation to the development of indigenisation and authentisation models, there are different suggestions. Yip (2006) operationalises indigenisation through a tridimensional process of universality-specificity, dominance-minority, and tradition-current situations. The first dimension takes into account the applicability of social work practice to all sociocultural contexts. The second notes the cultural context between the dominant and minority cultures and the third focuses on clients’ exposure to their own ethnic cultures and traditions. Moreover, this model highlights the three challenges in this process: (1) the diversity of social, cultural, and political contexts, (2) the complexity of indigenised cultures, traditions, languages, and customs, and (3) the changes of clients’ needs, difficulties, and psychosocial environment (Yip, 2006, p. 53).

Walton and Abo El Nasr (1988) propose a three-stage model of developing authentic social work, which is: transmission, indigenisation, and authentisation. They also stress keeping the balance between indigenisation and authentisation. For them, the process of indigenisation is large at the beginning and reduces gradually. In contrast, the process of authentisation is smaller at the beginning and grows larger at the end.

Added to this, Nimmagadda and Balgopal (2000) provide a five-stage model, which is based on their research in India, which describes a gradual change in perception of authentic services. They are: West is the best; awareness of the context; cultural construction of social work practice; learning by doing, the use of local knowledge, and reflectivity.

Generally, the professional struggle for indigenisation and authentisation is challenging. There is much work to be done on both sides: the North with its highly developed profession and the South where social work is still in its formation. According to Healy (2008), it is necessary to consider three factors when searching for relevant models of practice; these are: the relevance of interventions to the local context; the commitment to social and economic justice and poverty reduction; and human rights protection, people empowerment, universal service access, and the fair distribution of resources. More importantly, social work theory and practice need to “take account of cultural differences then comparisons will have to focus on the ways in which social work can be authentically contextualized” (Hugman, 2010b, p. 5). In the same regard, Hall and Midgley (2004) point to cultural appropriateness in social work and human service programs and Cox and Pawar (2006) note the need for the preconisation of cultural sensitiveness for social work education and practice. Figure 3.1, which is designed by Payne and Askeland (2008), explains the way in which cultural translation should take place to prevent anti-oppressive practices.

Figure 3.1 shows the way in which the process of cultural translation occurs between the dominant and minority cultures. It is a dynamic mechanism in which the dominant culture offers cultural material to minority culture. In turn, the minority re-offers it to the dominant with authentised cultural material. Thus, through a two-way exchange, indigenisation and authentisation can take place.

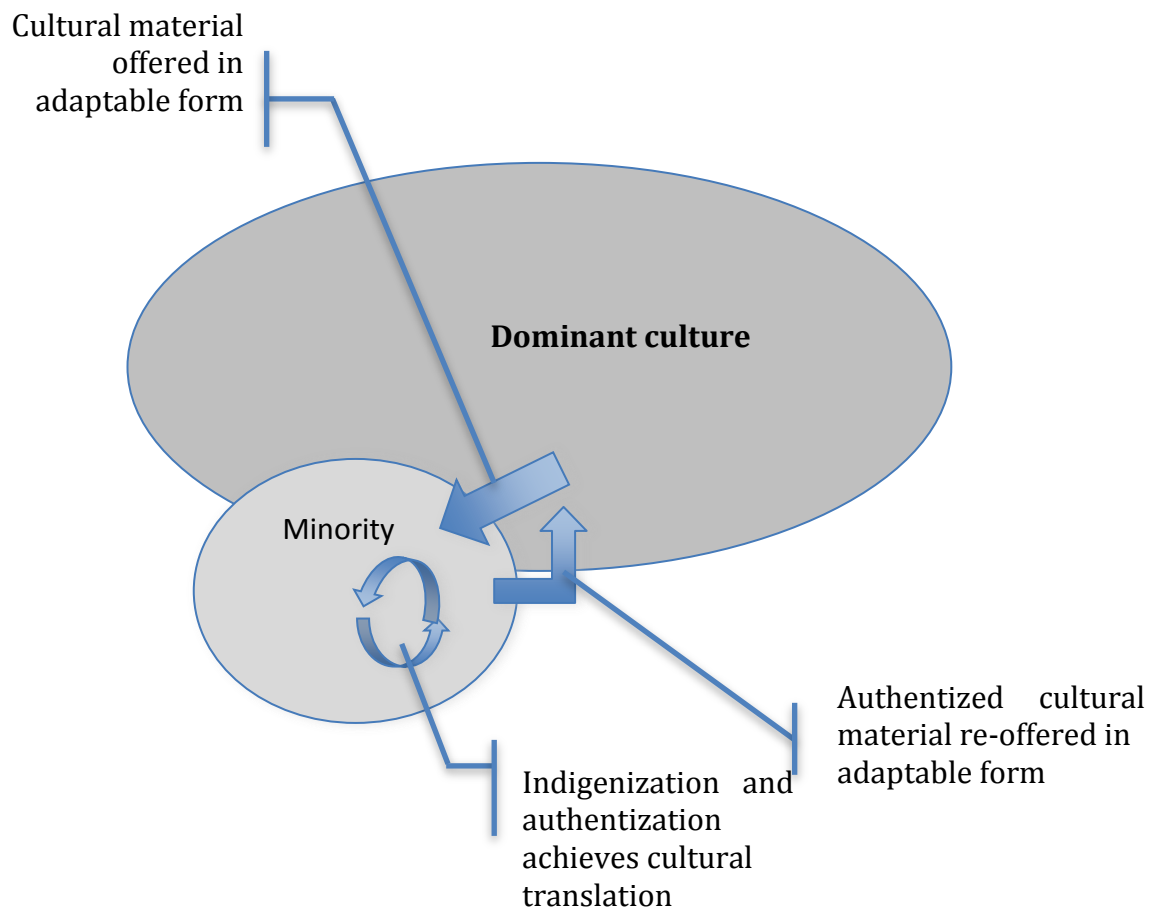


Figure 3.1: Cultural translation

Source: Payne and Askeland (2008), p. 52

This section has laid out the theoretical underpinnings of the methodology and approaches taken to explore the work of child welfare, social work and the relations between IO and local organisations in this work in Vietnam. Following is a description of the methodology of the study.

3.4 Methodology

3.4.1 Why a Qualitative Approach?

The study applies a qualitative approach in addressing the research questions. The advantages of utilising the qualitative method for this inquiry lie in the nature of its *naturalistic* and *interpretative* features and its exploration, explanation or description of a phenomenon (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998b; Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Padgett, 1998; Rossman & Rallis, 2003). It fits this study in mapping the development of social work services initiated by IOs for vulnerable children in Vietnam.

First, a qualitative approach is relevant to this study, which requires an in-depth exploration and explanation of the nature and complexity of social relations between the IOs and the LPs as well as the local vulnerable children. As asserted by scholars and methodologists, qualitative research is particularly suitable for studying social relations (Carey, 2012; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998b; Drisko, 2013; Flick, 1998; Higgs & Titchen, 2007; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). It enables the researcher to gain an “in-depth and interpreted understanding of the social world of research participants by learning about their social and material circumstances, their experiences, perspectives and histories” (Snape & Spencer, 2003, p. 3), and to “seek answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998b, p. 8). Higgs and Titchen (2007) state that it is the “ideal form to open the door” on the “complexity of human lives” (p. 2). Because qualitative inquiry is “grounded in the lived experiences of people” (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 2) and respects the humanity of participants in the study (Rossman & Rallis, 2003), it helps the researcher to unpack the “socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998b, p. 8). Ritchie (2003) provides a clear description of the main attribute of the qualitative methods.

A major feature of qualitative methods is their facility to describe and display phenomena as experienced by the study population, in fine-tuned detail and in the study participants’ own terms. It therefore offers the opportunity to ‘unpack’ issues, to see what they are about or what lies inside, and to explore how they are understood by those connected with them. (p. 27)

These are very important methodological characteristics for decoding the roles of international organisations in developing social work services through the experiences of different involved stakeholders.

Second, there has been evidence, pointed out in previous research, showing the usefulness of this approach in the social work field, particularly in maintaining professional relations between the researchers and research participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998b; Padgett, 1998; Shaw & Gould, 2001; Stake, 1998). It is considered a valuable method that has been increasingly used in social work studies because its oft-cited parallels and compatibility to social work practice (Drisko, 2013; Fortune, Reid, &

Miller, 2013). Besides that, Denzin and Lincoln (1998a) mention the early application of qualitative research in social work and other social sciences. Shaw and Gould (2001) also stress the importance of qualitative research to social work in getting to know the clients, services, organisations, policies, and especially in the aspect of studying contexts, which contribute to the professional knowledge base. Padgett (1998) and Fortune et al. (2013) analyse the common characteristics and compatibility between qualitative research and social work practice at the levels of process, nature, and ethics. The research of Camfield, Crivello, and Woodhead (2008) on wellbeing research in developing countries, including Vietnam, provided evidence that qualitative methodology can aid in “gaining a holistic and contextual understanding of people’s perceptions and experiences” (p. 5). In support of this, Mishna, Antle, and Regehr (2004) note that qualitative research creates a good chance to “tap into the richness of children’s thoughts and feelings about themselves, their environments and the world in which we all live”(p. 450).

Third, it is appropriate to the study context where social work is a new profession and where local awareness of its agenda is limited. Because qualitative inquiry is able to produce a richness of data (Patton, 1987, 2002; Richards, 2009; Shaw & Gould, 2001; Snape & Spencer, 2003), it helped to provide an in depth, holistic view of the development of social work services for vulnerable children, as well as aiding the evaluation of the appropriateness of the service models provided.

3.4.2 Research Design

For this inquiry, the researcher used a multiple case study design—a method that has been increasingly used as a research strategy in social work and other social sciences (Gilgun, 1994; Yin, 2003b; Stake, 1998, 2006). As Patton (1987) states:

Case studies become particularly useful where one needs to understand some particular problem or situation in great depth, and where one can identify cases rich in information—rich in the sense that a great deal can be learned from a few exemplars of the phenomenon in question. (p. 19)

There are three reasons why the researcher employed case studies in this research. First, case studies are well recognised as a good method that can best provide a detailed description of a social phenomenon (Hakim, 2000; Yin, 2003a, 2003b) as it is

considered a “holistic approach to the study of social phenomena” (Gerring, 2007, p. 50). Additionally, this method helped to capture the portrayal of IOs’ roles in social work professionalisation and the development of professional services provided to disadvantaged children in Vietnam.

Second, case studies can be exploratory or be an illustrative portrait of social entities or patterns thought to be typical, representative or average, and can facilitate the unpacking of the complexity of social phenomena (Gerring, 2007; Hakim, 2000; Yin, 2003a, 2003b). “Process case studies can advance the understanding of the complexities of implementing interventions at the individual, program, and policy level” (Gilgun, 1994, p. 374). The strength of a multiple case study is that it helps to collect a variety of sources of evidence (Yin, 2003b).

Third, case studies are a useful method for studying organisations to discover the best practice, organisation issues and processes of change and adaptation (Hakim, 2000). Hakim (2000) maintains that: “at the most rigorous level, case studies are designed to achieve *experimental isolation* of selected social factors or processes within a real-life context, so as to provide a strong test of prevailing explanations and ideas” (p. 60). This supported the researcher in her review of the IOs’ support service models in order to develop authentic social work service models for local disadvantaged children.

Generally, the benefits of the case study design provide a strong opportunity to intensively observe, explore and analyse the relationship between IOs and social work, as well as the social work services models provided for disadvantaged children in Vietnam. By using a variety of sources, case studies provide comprehensive accounts of social issues and processes (Hakim, 2000).

The figure 3.2 is a summary of the study process, which details the steps of how the study was conducted.

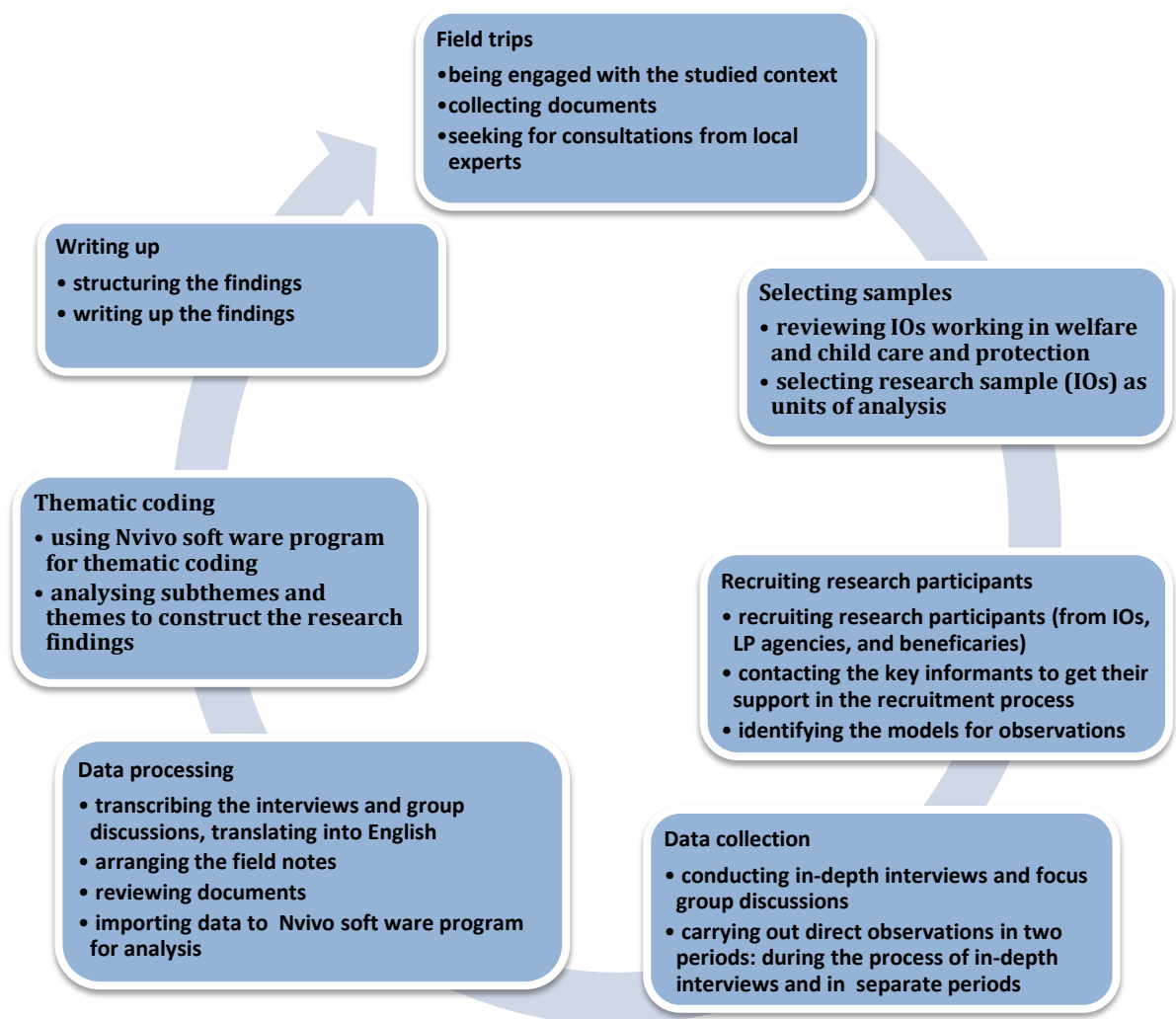


Figure 3.2: Study process

3.4.3 Data Collection Strategies

The research employed triangulation which, in Denzin and Lincoln's (1998a) definition, is "to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question" (p. 4) in data collection. Three data collection strategies were used to generate a broad range of information: In-depth interviews and focus group discussions were appropriate for getting in depth information on specific issues, document analysis, and direct observations were useful when collecting data on the broad issues of social work introduction to Vietnam and supplemented for in-depth interviews and group discussions (see Figure 3.3).

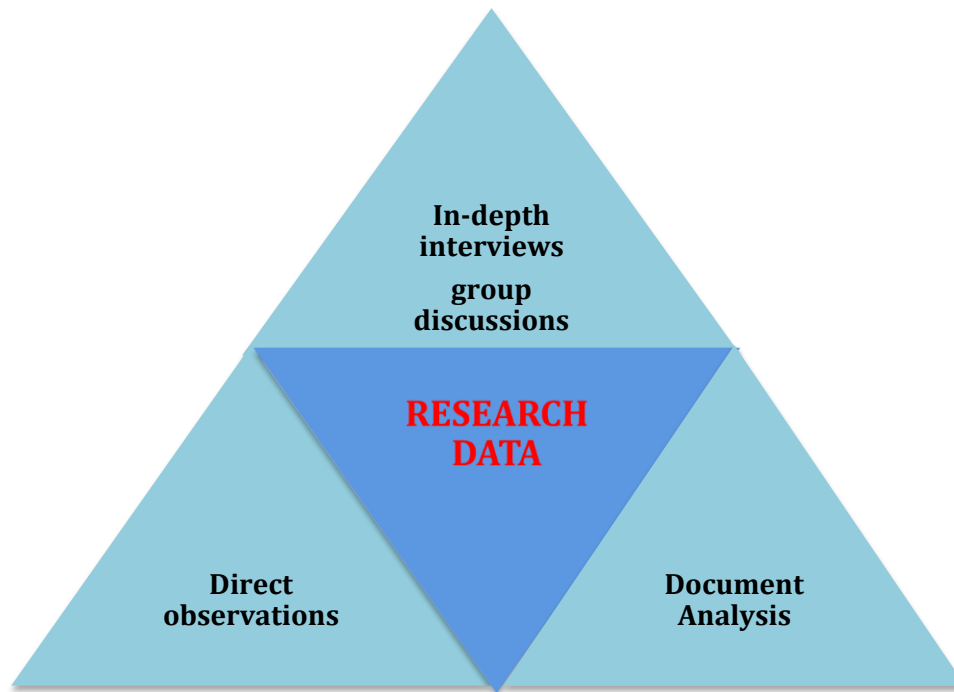


Figure 3.3: Data collection strategies: A triangulation approach

By employing a combination of in-depth interviews, group discussions, document analysis, and direct observations, the researcher was able to validate and crosscheck findings from a range of different data resources reducing the weaknesses of any single data collection strategy (Patton, 2002). Using multiple sources of data also produced a *thick description* for the case studies research (Gilgun, 1994).

3.4.3.1 In-depth Interviews

A total of 39 interviews with 45 hour-long, were conducted with the officers and staff from the five selected IOs and their LP agencies as well as the beneficiaries. There were two separate semi-structure interview guides used for in-depth interviews. One was designed for interviews with the staff from IOs. The other was for interviewing the officers and service providers from the IOs' local partner institutions and the beneficiaries. A semi-structured style (Alston & Bowles, 2012) was used in order to encourage two-way communication between the researcher and the research participants and discover any new aspects not originally envisaged.

Each semi-structured guide consists of 18 suggested topics in the form of open-ended questions (see Appendix D). The suggested topics were categorised into four

areas. The first is about general information of the IOs' projects and programs for disadvantaged children; the second asks about the process of building and running those programs; the third concerns the roles, functions and relationships between different stakeholders; and the fourth asks for the research participants' insights, comments and assessment about the projects and programs which provide social services for disadvantaged children and their future expectations for indigenous and authentic service models.

Two semi-structured interview guides were first prepared in English and then translated into Vietnamese. The pre-tested interviews were conducted one month before the actual interviews took place. After the pre-test, the semi-structured interviews were revised to ensure the appropriateness of the language used and the questions delivered to the research participants as well as the detail of sub-topics. The average interview length was 1 hour and 18 minutes. The shortest interview was 30 minutes and the longest was over 2 hours. With the research participants' consent, the interviews were recorded and transcribed for the purpose of research data collection and transcription.

The transcriptions were sent to the research participants for their verification, if required, before they were translated into English for data analysis. Transcripts were re-identified by labelling the same codes known only to the researcher. These same codes were used to refer to any particular participant throughout the written component of the thesis. In four cases the participants were not comfortable with being recorded and the researcher was requested to take notes. The notes were treated as a data source for the thesis and followed the same process as the transcribed documents.

During the interviews, the researcher used the tactics of *probes* (Padgett, 1998) to go deeper into the topics that participants mentioned. For example, the question often used to probe was: "you previously mentioned your difficulty in dealing with the institutional structure system, can you elaborate more about this?"

A facesheet (Lofland & Lofland, 1995) that records the date, time of the interview, location and some information about the research participants was attached to each

interview. This helps the researcher to keep track of the schedule of in-depth interviews and basic information about the participants, such as their gender, working positions, agencies and so forth.

3.4.3.2 Focus Group Discussions

The advantages of focus-group discussions are that this method is socially oriented. They study participants in an atmosphere more natural than artificial experimental circumstances and are more relaxed than a one-to one interview (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 114). In this sense, focus group discussions were chosen to generate information from disadvantaged children and youth who are the social service beneficiaries and children who participated in service programs. This strategy is believed to bring less risk to child research participants and reduces the researcher's power over children (Mishna et al., 2004). Three focus group discussions were conducted. The first two group discussions were for the children and youth who were beneficiaries. The third was facilitated for children who have voluntarily participated in the program as community collaborators. The total amount of time for the three group interviews was four hours.

The number of children in each group discussion, consisting of five to six children and youth, meets the standard of a *moderate size* so that the researcher can get the participants' insights and perspectives on the research topic (Morgan, 1988, p. 43). There were nine girls and seven boys. The children aged 15 and above were invited to participate. The reason for this selection was because the researcher wanted to minimise the risks for younger children (Bruzzese & Fisher, 2003).

The first two groups of 11 children and youth came from difficult circumstances. They were either orphaned or from very poor families and came from provinces from the north to the middle part of Vietnam. Two of them had time living in SPCs. Ten out of 11 had not finished their secondary schooling.

The five children in the third group discussion were at secondary school, and came from ordinary families living in the IOs' project site. They had participated in IO projects as community volunteers and although they were not the primary

beneficiaries, they secondarily benefited. Their capacity was strengthened, and more importantly, they were empowered through participating in project activities.

A focus group discussion guide, consisting of 10 open-ended questions, was proposed, translated into Vietnamese and also pre-tested for a group of eight children in an orphanage village before the actual interviews were conducted (see Appendix D). The selected children participated in 1 hour and 20 minute-long group discussions. The duration of the discussions was considered as the most suitable length for a focus group discussion in social sciences (Esterberg, 2002; Morgan, 1988).

The location and other logistic preparations were carried out with assistance from the local institution officers, so that the children felt most comfortable when sharing their ideas, comments, and feelings about the services they received.

To facilitate the group discussions effectively, the researcher as an interviewer and a facilitator created a supportive environment by carefully selecting the location, conducting warm-up introductions, and posing questions to encourage discussion and the expression of differing opinions and points of view. During the introductions of the group discussions, the researcher additionally informed the children about confidentiality and helped them to set up ground rules for the discussion, such as respecting other's ideas, giving your friend a chance to share, and keeping the confidentiality of all the information shared in the discussion. For the purpose of exploratory study to get more understanding of disadvantaged children's experience and perspectives on social work models introduced by IOs, during the group interview session, the researcher kept a low level of involvement to enable a "form of highly nondirective focus groups" (Morgan, 1988, p. 49).

With the children's consent, and that of their parents/guardians in cases where the children were under 16 years old, discussions were recorded. Recordings then were transcribed and verified by representatives from group before being translated into English for data processing. The research strictly followed all the ethical requirements in keeping informed consent, confidentiality and minimising the risk for the child research participants. The researcher informed the children that, if anyone felt upset about what he/she shared with the group, he/she could contact an expert for help.

This expert, who agreed to support the children, was from the Social Work Development Centre located at the University of Labour and Social Affairs in Hanoi (see Appendix E).

3.4.3.3 Document analysis

An analysis of relevant documents was conducted; specifically those related to the IOs' activities and operational mechanisms in delivering social work services to disadvantaged children and those concerned with Vietnamese government strategies, policies, and guidelines for child care and protection. Documents are seen as a "rich source of information about many organizations and programs" (Patton, 2002, p. 293). This "least obtrusive" means of data collection provided "valuable information" (Padgett, 1998, p. 67) on the social policies for disadvantaged children, the local government's guidelines and strategies, the IOs' objectives and service orientations as well as on the future trends for development of social work services in written documents. In addition, documents give additional strength to the observations and in-depth interviews that will make findings trustworthy (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

Documents were generated from various sources, including official documents issued by the government of Vietnam, published reports from IOs, materials that describe INGOs, and electronic texts. The collected documents afterward were classified and sorted by relevance to the research. Then, they underwent the process of analysis.

3.4.3.4 Observation of Social Services for Disadvantaged Children

Direct observations were carried out to assess the process of social services delivery for disadvantaged children via field trips to the sites. As Marshall and Rossman (2006) assert, "observation is a fundamental and highly important method in all qualitative inquiry. It is used to discover complex interactions in natural social settings" (p. 99). Patton (2002) points out the six advantages of direct observation in qualitative research. They include: (1) helping the researcher to gain a better understanding and capture of the context of peoples interactions, (2) orienting the researcher's openness, discovery and induction, (3) promoting a good chance for the researcher to observe

things, (4) allowing the researcher to study things that are not revealed openly, (5) facilitating the researcher to go further with others' selective perception, and (6) improving the researcher's knowledge of the analysis (pp. 262-264).

The researcher had to get consent to observe the service providers and disadvantaged children involved in the social service models. The consent process was in accordance with ethical clearance from the University of New South Wales. The research was approved by the Human Research Ethics Advisory Panel B for the Arts, Humanities & Law Reference with issue number: 11 059 (see Appendix F).

Field notes, that captured detailed information of what was observed, were taken and used as a source of data supporting the data analysis and research findings. The field notes responded to both questions concerning *what* and the *how* (Padgett, 1998). The *what* was addressed by thick descriptions of the observed fields' physical space, the personnel involved in the services for children; the behaviours, interactions and relationships among staff and between staff and vulnerable children, and also the expressions of feelings or emotions both from the field and the researcher (Padgett, 1998, p. 57). The *how* dealt with the "flexibility and sensitivity of the situation" (Padgett, 1998, p. 57). These field notes reflected both descriptive and analytic features which gave the researcher a good source for formulating themes in data for analysis (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Thus, the field notes were detailed descriptions of basic information about the place, the physical settings, the people and the time of observations. They also contained the researcher's reflections about her feelings, and comments and assessment.

All the field notes were organised and put into folders marked by the date taken and the researchers' comments. Based on the IOs' permission and actual conditions, the observation period lasted up to two weeks for each organisation.

3.4.4 Sample Selection

3.4.4.1 Selection of International Organisations

This study adopted purposeful sampling selection, which brought rich and deep data for the inquiry (Esterberg, 2002; Padgett, 1998; Patton, 2002). As Patton (2002)

asserts, “the logic and power of purposeful sampling lie in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth” (p.230). Before the selection process, the research had two and a half months to carry out fieldwork. This first field trip helped the researcher to sense the ways in which data were made. As Richards (2009) stresses:

before you decided how you are going to ‘get’ your data, you will need to observe the situation you are about to enter and reflect on the new situation to be created by your research, considering how settings and conversations might affect what people see and feel and say. (p. 39)

Padgett (1998) states, “the success of qualitative research depends on the ability of the researcher to become immersed in the world of the respondent and to be engaged in the field for a relatively long period of time” (p. 34). Therefore, the fieldtrip conducted by the researcher in advance was very useful, not only for getting acquainted with the context, but also in creating a good opportunity for experiencing the research participants’ world. All the results gathered during this fieldwork trip contributed to building a foundation for choosing the right units of analysis for the research.

In addition, the researcher was aware of the fact that she is Vietnamese, and had been trained in social work. She also had previous knowledge of the social protection system. It is important to keep on self-reflecting in order to have an objective viewpoint on the whole process of the sample selection.

After the field trip, the five IOs were selected for the case studies based on the two criteria: (1) to represent different types of IOs and to operate in a variety of social services programs; and (2) to be exemplary or typical cases in child welfare services for disadvantaged children. These criteria reflected the way that case studies design could gain credibility by choosing the *typical* and *representative* cases that represent the phenomenon of IO contributions to social work services for disadvantaged children in Vietnam (Gerring, 2007, p. 49). This selection process involved initial document analyses on the IOs working in the fields of child care and protection and expert consultations with senior workers who worked in the child welfare field.

The five IOs were selected as they provided opportunities to investigate the phenomenon of IOs in relations with social work services for disadvantaged children in

Vietnam (Stake, 1998). Throughout this thesis, these will be referred to codes IO (A), IO (B), IO (C), IO (D), and IO (E).

IO (A) was chosen because it represents the most active UN agency in child welfare in Vietnam. This organisation provides a wide range of social services from micro work at the grass-root level to macro programs working with government bodies for policy advocacy and development. It has played a significant role in the reintroduction of social work in Vietnam since the late 1980s. It was observed that the first social work services introduced in Vietnam were for children in difficult circumstances supported by this organisation. Moreover, this organisation was also a pioneer in social work capacity building. It created projects to develop bare-foot service providers, training local people (almost of whom are women) as direct service providers. In addition it has supported programs to train social work staff in other organisations. It has been actively engaged in conducting research and supporting development of the core national curricula and training programs at university and college levels.

IO (B) is a large and influential INGO that has operated in Vietnam since the 1990s. The available information shows that this INGO has had a long history working with Vietnamese disadvantaged children in many areas, such as health and nutrition, child protection, HIV/AIDS, emergency services, and child rights agendas and livelihoods. It has conducted different programs in social work, such as helping the universities and colleges to develop teaching material, conducting research, and providing short-term training courses for both teaching staff and grass-root service providers.

IO (C) is also a large and important INGO that has carried out many supporting projects for vulnerable children and their families in areas of community health, early childhood care and development, quality basic education, sustainable living, and child protection. It has long engaged in providing projects and programs at the grass root level. IO (C) has established models for child friendly discipline, community based systems of child care and protection, counselling services for children in conflict with the law in reform schools as well as prevention programs for children in disaster areas. It was also useful to see this organisation's role in social work development and their social service programs.

IO (D) is a social entrepreneur founded by a Vietnamese Australian in the 1990s. It first provided services for street kids under a sandwich shop. With more than 10 years of development, this organisation is now a prestigious vocational training institution for children and youth in difficult circumstances. The reason that IO (D) was selected was because it is a unique social enterprise, which provides street children and youth in difficult circumstances with a vocation to start their lives. This is a new model of support to disadvantaged children in Vietnam and needs to be studied for the future development of this helpful model.

IO (E) originally worked in Vietnam in the area of child adoption. When this organisation returned in 1994, they assisted the government of Vietnam in the operation of orphanages and the provision of social services to orphaned children. IO (E) is considered a pioneering INGO that provides short-term social work training for staff working with children and offers alternative care for disadvantaged children. It has developed a model of social workers working in community to help orphaned children and foster families. This is an important model of social services that needs to be examined in line with the future orientation of child care and protection strategy in Vietnam. At the present, it has been introducing programs in family preservation, single mother services, child care support, foster care, and domestic and inter-country adoption.

3.4.4.2 Selection of Research Participants

IO and LP Participants

Thirty-nine research participants were recruited through a mixed method of stratified representation and snowballing. To engage staff from IOs, first the researcher went to the organisations, introduced her research and asked for the volunteers. For the snowballing sample, the researcher asked the managers of the organisation, as gatekeepers, to nominate the relevant research participants to complete the list of positions needed for the research. The recruitment of research participants at the IOs ensured there were representatives from various managing positions (country directors, head of the child protection units, regional managers), project officers, project assistants, and direct care workers.

For the IO local partner research participants, the inquiry mainly utilised snowball sampling. Following the process of this sampling, the researcher worked with managers and project coordinators, as key informants, to identify suitable people who could provide the most valuable information for the research. The researcher then devised a list of prospective research participants. From that list, the researcher then selected the most representative participants (for example, from different working positions, different working fields, and different locations in Vietnam), contacted them, introduced the research and obtained consent for in-depth interviews. This process was carefully conducted to guarantee the greatest objectivity possible.

Eighteen local staff and one villager agreed to participate in the research. Sixteen are Vietnamese. They held different positions and participated in different parts of IO projects and programs. These positions ranged from vice-directors of a department at ministry level, the vice-director of a DOLISA, a director of social work services centre, the heads of a ministry department unit or provincial department, leaders of community Women's Association, the head of a community kindergarten, and the head of a community clinic, to bare-foot service providers, such as community staff or community collaborators. Figure 3.4 below shows the ratio of research participants by their positions.

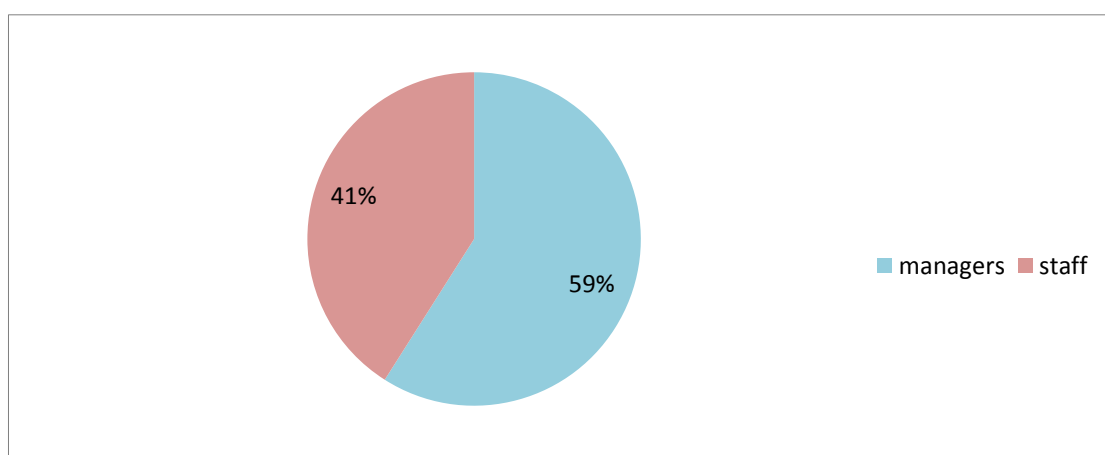


Figure 3.4: Ratio of managers and staff participants

Before the in-depth interviews were conducted, all of the staff and officers were given a research document package which included a participant information statement, a consent form and a revocation of consent form to further their

understanding of the research, their roles if they agree to take part in the research and their right to participate and withdraw from the research any time they wished (see Appendix E). At the beginning of each interview the researcher again informed the research participants about their rights to accept or withdraw from the study when they wanted. The number of participants interviewed is presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Distribution of the research participants

	No of IO participants	No of LP participants	Total
IO (A)	4	6	10
IO (B)	3	4	7
IO (C)	4	3	7
IO (D)	6	0*	6
IO (E)	4	5	9
Total	21	18	39

Note: (*) There is no representative from IO (D)'s local partners as this IO is a direct provider organisation for disadvantaged children and youth.

Program Beneficiaries

Disadvantaged children and youth who are the beneficiaries of services and children who participated in the social services programs sponsored by the five selected IOs, were invited to participate in focus group interviews. To invite them to participate in the research, the researcher first visited the project sites, got to know the children and youth, and with the support from IO staff and the commune staff, provided information about the research. If they showed interest in the research, the researcher gave them the research information package and asked them to get consent from their guardians if they were under 16 (see Appendix E). When all the consent forms were signed, group discussions were arranged according to their most convenient times and locations.

A single mother, who is engaged in an outreach program, was invited to participate in the study. She was first introduced to the researcher by an IO project officer and fully consented to an in-depth interview. Her interview took place at her own house. Although her interview was uniquely one on one, she provided insight into the topic. It would be ethically problematic if her ideas and comments were not used.

3.4.5 Data Analysis

3.4.5.1 Documentation/Data Management

Data collected from in-depth interviews and focus group interviews under the form of taped recordings were quickly transcribed into Microsoft Word documents with the support of the NVivo program. All of the transcripts were assigned a code number to protect confidentiality, and only the researcher knew the participant identities. During this time the researcher had the opportunity to familiarise herself with, and gain an initial understanding of the data.

Data was first collected in the Vietnamese language and then translated into English. To avoid the researcher's subjectivity and bias and to maintain the quality of the data, the English version of the data was reviewed and edited by a Vietnamese social work lecturer who has background in social work and is proficient in English. This process followed research ethical principles.

When observations were conducted, the researcher recorded field notes of the process of social service delivery. Field notes were kept in folders marked by the date taken and the researcher's comments. These notes were used to form the background in constructing the themes for in-depth interviews and focus group discussions.

Documents collected from various sources related to the five selected IOs and government documents were organised according to topics and relevant content and organised into folders. All folders were marked with notes so that the researcher could easily find the contents needed for analysis. The researcher used the approach of content analysis (Padgett, 1998; Schwandt, 2001; Esterberg, 2002; Krippendorff, 2003) for the collected documents.

All the raw data was kept in a securely locked cabinet to which only the researcher had access.

3.4.5.2 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis, as Braun and Clarke (2006) argue, gives the researcher "flexibility" and a "more accessible form of analysis" (p. 81). Thematic analysis, when applied in

qualitative data analysis, fits within different theoretical frameworks and paradigms. Thematic analysis “examines the ways in which events, realities, meanings, experiences and so on are the effects of a range of discourses operating within society” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 81).

All data collected from document analysis (official government documents, IO documents, articles, speeches, brochures), except interviews transcripts, were transferred to Microsoft Word documents. These files were then imported into NVivo, a computer software program that was developed to support qualitative data analysis. This involved an inductive process to find the *meaning units* (Padgett, 1998) by finding all relevant phrases, sentences and paragraphs put into nodes in the NVivo program. The two level model of data coding introduced by Saldaña (2009) was applied in this process. For the first cycle coding, a mixed-methods approach was used (Saldaña, 2009), including the initial coding, descriptive coding, In Vivo—codes emerged from the participants’ own language, and emotion coding. The second cycle of coding involved the work of recoding, reorganising and reconfiguring to develop more accurate and refined categories, themes and concepts. Coding methods, such as pattern coding and focused coding were used. Pattern coding helped to identify the emerging themes as units of analysis, while focused coding built the *most salient categories* from the data (Charmaz, 2006, p. 46).

After this coding process was checked and completed, the codes served to develop patterns (Saldaña, 2009). The patterns were grouped into categories. This process involved the grouping of similar and common codes. The categories were then clustered into themes (see Appendix G). Determining the final themes involved the work of recoding and recategorising several times (Saldaña, 2009) to achieve refined results. NVivo allows open coding throughout the whole data coding process, which is useful for data analysis. The themes which emerged in the coding process were recorded and reviewed by the researcher for presenting the research findings and discussion.

The researcher kept preliminary jottings (Saldaña, 2009) for coding from the time when data was collected. All the words, phrases or sentences that emerged as well as the researcher’s thoughts about the data in the data processing were noted in the

researcher's memo of coding. These analytic memos helped the researcher to document and reflect on the whole process of coding: the codes themselves, categories, themes and concepts in the data (Saldaña, 2009, p. 32). This is very useful tool to keep track of the emerging themes, concepts, and developing the understanding of the development of social work services for disadvantaged children in Vietnam.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Ethics in research mainly aim at protecting human subjects from harm and, more importantly, respect the participants' dignity and humanity (Alston & Bowles, 2012; Butler, 2002; Hugman, 2010a; Padgett, 1998). They remind the social work researchers to keep the "delicate balancing act of learning while doing no harm" (Padgett, 1998, p. 33). The research ensured *informed consent*, identified by Padgett (1998) as one of the five factors of ethical research, which also included: providing an overview of the research and its process, identifying the researcher, which includes supplying full contact details, participants' rights for revocation at any time; and informing the confidentiality and the risks that may happen related with their participation.

The researcher respected the confidentiality and privacy of the participants, particularly during data collection and reporting findings. All the interviews were assigned a code number. Pseudonyms were used to prevent readers knowing who had provided the information (Padgett, 1998). In order to present and discuss specific points clearly, in a small number of places the INGOs are identified. However, the individual officers remain anonymous. This adds a level of complexity to the task of presenting interview data. Because the social work sector in Vietnam is still small and developing, most of the people who are involved know or know of each other. So to ensure that confidentiality and privacy are maintained as well as are possible, quotations are attributed in terms of the role and location of participants with each individual then numbered to distinguish between the different participants. For example, IOP1 identifies a person working in an international organisation, distinct from IOP2, IOP3, and so on. Similarly, local partner officers/staff are referred to as LPP1, LPP2 and so on. Where the context of the specific organisation is relevant to the

analysis, this is integrated with the discussion, distinguishing the organisations as IO and LP for the people as IOP and LPP.

The first ethical consideration for this research was to ensure that it would not cause any inconvenience during the data collection process, especially when observations were taken. It is important to note that in the first visit to the project sites, the researcher discovered that most of these places had never before hosted any researchers. Therefore, it was necessary that the researcher spend time with the participants in order to put them at ease. This field trip took from two to four visits before data was collected.

More importantly, as this research involved disadvantaged children as research participants, to minimise the possible risk for children, the researcher carefully prepared the logistics of the process. As noted previously, the researcher made an arrangement for an external counselling expert to help children in case they needed any psychosocial support. This ensures the ethical principle of preventing emotional harm (Padgett, 1998). The researcher applied several strategies in reducing the power structure with research participants, particularly with the children, such as choosing the appropriate language. The researcher also stressed the importance of learning their true stories, ideas, and comments.

During the process of in-depth interviews, the researcher encountered challenges in obtaining research participants' signatures. Albeit they all agreed voluntarily to participate in the interviews, when it came to getting their signatures, some of them were hesitant. They told the researcher that she could ask them anything, but she could not have their signatures. This situation contravenes ethical requirements. To deal with this, the researcher spent time explaining the ethical procedure, which respects the research participants' rights of autonomy and informed consent (Hugman, 2010a).

On the whole, the researcher ethically treated the research based on social work ethics of doing no harm to participants and being aware of the obligation to empower participants (Butler, 2002). The researcher ensured that all stages of the research process, from designing and analysing to publicising, was conducted in a manner

respecting the participant's autonomy, minimising any physical and mental risk or harm, and striving for professional changes.

3.6 Research Considerations

The first consideration was the case study research design. Case studies are often considered rather weak in their ability to generalise the research results, particularly when only one or a small number of cases are examined (Gerring, 2007; Yin, 2003a, 2003b). This thesis addressed this limitation by using a multi-case approach by selecting five IOs as the unit of analysis and making comparisons between cases.

Second, as social work in Vietnam is a new field, it is recognised that many professional terms are not available in the Vietnamese language. This could affect the quality of the collected data. To mitigate this limitation, semi-structured guides in an open-ended style were developed to give as much space as possible for research participants to share their ideas and experiences.

Third, this research was conducted to get the participants' (including LP service providers and vulnerable children who are the direct beneficiaries of the services) feedback about the delivered programs and services, however, it may be difficult for the LPs and children to express their true feelings and experiences about these programs. They might be afraid if they say something negative it will hurt their sponsors, and consequently their involvement in programs and services will also be affected. To deal with this potential weakness, research participants were well informed of the research protocols, especially the research ethical requirements and were provided with the most comfortable venues and environment for giving ideas, comments, and evaluations.

3.7 Research Trustworthiness

Guba (1981) identifies the trustworthiness of a qualitative inquiry as very important criteria for sound and rigorous research. The following section discusses the applications of strategies for research trustworthiness.

First, the credibility of the research is presented through the adoption of a well-established research method—multiple case studies which are not only suitable for the study field but also fit with the context.

Second, the inquiry employed triangulation by using multiple data collection strategies with in-depth interviews and group discussions, document analysis, and observation. It also used triangulation in a variety of information resources and informants. With data triangulation, Yin (2003b) states, “the potential problems of construct validity also can be addressed because the multiple sources of evidence essentially provide multiple measures of the same phenomenon” (p. 99). Moreover, Brewer and Hunter (2006) claim that triangulation increases the accuracy of the studied phenomenon.

Third, through field trips and regular visits to IOs and their project sites, I have established *prolonged engagement* with the research participants. This helped to develop the trust of the participants and facilitated familiarity with the culture of the five studied IOs. Additionally, this engagement can alleviate the threats of reactivity and respondent biases (Padgett, 1998). For example, the focus group interviews were only taken after three visits over two weeks, during which the researcher built a rapport with the children and gained their trust.

Fourth, to ensure the objectivity of study, the researcher paid special attention to involving a wide range of stakeholders in different positions to obtain the most honest information for analysis. Transcripts were subjected to checking by a local social work trained professional who has English competence. Additionally, the researcher kept consulting with the local experts throughout the whole study process. To increase the validity of research findings, the researcher also applied cross-cases comparisons of the five studied IOs.

3.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter has addressed two central questions: (1) What is the conceptual framework that shapes the research approach, and (2) what is the methodology used in conducting the research. In the first section, the intention to apply middle-range theory and an interpretive paradigm to guide the research was asserted. Three

theories and concepts, including globalisation, human rights, and indigenisation and authentisation were adopted to provide a comprehensive lens to address the research problems. In the second section, the methodology of the research was explained. It began with the justification for a qualitative approach. Subsequently, a detailed description of a case study research design was presented. Additionally, the processes of data collection, sampling, and data analysis were explained the research procedure. Lastly, discussed were the research ethics, research limitations, and the trustworthiness of the project.

This Chapter closes the first section of the thesis. The next section, from Chapter 4 to Chapter 8, presents the research findings. Chapter 4 introduces the IOs' first process of professionalisation via empowerment strategies.

CHAPTER 4

LOCAL CAPACITY AND IOS' EMPOWERMENT STRATEGY

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter explained the conceptual framework and methodology of this thesis. To recap, the thesis questions are as follows:

- 1) What is the relationship between international organisations (IOs) and social work as demonstrated in the development of social work services for disadvantaged children in Vietnam?
- 2) How can such social work service models meet the children's needs appropriately and effectively? And,
- 3) How can indigenous and authentic social work service models for vulnerable children in Vietnam be developed?

Chapters 4 to 8 present the research findings in relation to IOs' roles in the professionalisation of social work, specifically, in the development of services for disadvantaged children. The findings begin with how IOs empower local systems, and then continue with a discussion on the professionalisation of services for disadvantaged children as well as the issues and challenges in this process. IOs and local partners (LPs)' relationship are analysed, including a quest for indigenising, or it might be said, "Vietnamising" and authenticising the social work profession and its services.

The present Chapter describes the findings in regard to local capacity and the way in which IOs are introducing 'empowerment' as their initial step in the process of professionalising social work services. This Chapter begins with an assessment made by the IO and LP research participants (hereafter the IO research participant will be coded as IOP and the LP research participant is LPP) about the current local capacity of social work and professional services. Subsequently, it discusses the way in which the empowerment process is carried out through a variety of strategies in awareness raising and capacity building for LPs, staff, service providers, and the community.

Finally, the Chapter details the professional changes in legislation, social policy development, and the social work profession.

4.2 Local Capacity: An Important Issue

Local capacity was raised by the research participants as their primary concern when they were asked about professional development. They saw local capacity from three aspects. First was a lack of a professional legal supportive system and social policies. Second was structural problems, which created negative impacts on the professional development of social work services for disadvantaged children. And third was the lack of professional human resources.

4.2.1 The Lack of Professional Legal Supports and Social Policies

The majority of IO officers and LP staff indicated that there is much that is ‘incomplete’ in legal and social policies encouraging the development of the social work profession and its practice. This was expressed in relation to the absence of a comprehensive legal framework and the lack of relevant social policies and national programs as well as system problems.

4.2.1.1 The Lack of Legal Framework

The first issue of local capacity, which was raised by many IO and LP research participants, focuses on the incomplete and incompatible local legal system in child care and protection as well as the lack of laws for the social work profession. Such problems have resulted in many difficulties and challenges for social work professionalisation and service operation. Three key factors are presented below.

First, the research participants identified their concerns about the incomplete local legal framework. A director of a social work services centre (SWSC) clearly identified that there are “no policies and regulations on children during and after the rehabilitation” (LPP7). This point was supported by an IO officer who said that the poor legal framework was an obstacle in her service program implementation. She claimed:

In the field of LISA, the current regulations for SPCs are only to care for and raise the children in these institutions. They do not include the task and function of making permanent plans to look for families for the children. (IOP6)

For both of these participants, this was a gap in the legal system that needed to be addressed in order to provide a sound platform for professionalising services for vulnerable children. Thus, in the near future, the government should pay attention to issuing relevant legal documents in professional child care and protection.

In addition, IO participants stressed the problem of not having a comprehensive legal document in which key principle terms in child care and protection were not clearly stated. For example, with an unclear definition of clients' best interests, clients might be excluded from social policies and programs. As an IO stated:

Our law enshrines the best interests of the child, but does not define what the best interests of the child are. (IOP6)

This generates obstacles in the process of supporting children in IO programs for vulnerable children. This officer compared the local law with a neighbouring country, Thailand, where she found that, with a clear definition of children's best interest, children were always at the centre of all activities.

Moreover, the incompleteness of local laws neither includes clients nor facilitates protection of children. IOP1 mentioned the lack of regulations for children in conflict with the law being a barrier to working with a province in the north of Vietnam to introduce a service model. Therefore, when they were conducting services for such children in the province, they had to add and adjust the policies. Sharing the same view, IOP17 identified a gap in the local law that, in some way, encouraged single women with unplanned pregnancies to abandon their infants due to the legal paper requirements. This was because some of the mothers wanted to protect themselves from community bias. The following are their comments:

Our law does not support children in conflict with the law. So the bottom line is that the system of child protection is not yet completed. (IOP1)

I think the law has many shortcomings that force women to abandon their children. We can ask them to go back to their own towns and finish all the paper work while keeping the information secret. So they have to abandon their infants. (IOP17)

Second, two IO officers critically noted the inconsistencies in the local legal system. While IOP6 mentioned the incongruence between local laws and social policies, IOP2 stated that the local legal system with children in conflict with the law did not

correspond with the UN conventions and international children's rights. Taking child adoption as an illustration, IOP6 said that what was stated in the law on child adoption about the requirements for child adoption, was not covered in the regulations governing SPCs. Thus, she concluded:

The SPC is not empowered to enact these functions and the centre is under State administration. Therefore, the legal corridor is a problem. (IOP6)

IOP2 illustrated:

What the UN guidance points out is that sending children to reform schools is only the final resort. But in Vietnam, recent work shows that getting children to reform school is a very frequent activity and it happens a lot. (IOP2)

For this IO participant, the policy has violated the children's rights to freedom. As such, local authorities should take into consideration how to make the local social policies conform to international conventions.

Third, IO interviewees were specifically concerned about the absence of a supportive legal framework for social work development, adding to difficulties in practice. Six IO participants provided a critical viewpoint on this regard. Their concerns focused on difficulties they experienced because of the lack of both a supporting legislative framework and a clear administrative structure for their practice. An international volunteer, whose background is in social work, noted:

The legal framework [for the social work profession] is incomplete. Therefore, it is difficult for the young social work profession in Vietnam to establish a strong foothold as well as engender public trust in social work. (IOP3)

Due to the absence of professional supportive mechanisms and legal framework, two IO interviewees discussed the problem that social work graduates could not find a position in the child care and protection field. One pointed out the lack of mechanisms to guide graduates to work, so that when they went to work in communities, nobody provided them with working permission to perform their professional tasks systematically. The other IO was worried about the effectiveness of human resource management. This poses the question of how to keep the quality and utilisation of professional human resources. This is especially the case when it comes to the lower level of authorities, as commented on by IOP12. He voiced the fact that the shortage

of a systematic enforcement in laws has created an uncertainty about professional implementation at specific localities.

When we ask them [central government officers] to enforce these [professional activities] through legislation they said Vietnam was decentralised. They issued the decisions, but it was the responsibility of the local authorities whether they could apply them or not. (IOP12)

It is important to note that the lack of social work practice guidelines pushes LPs towards depending on their international partners.

When they are implementing programs, they just follow suggestions from international partners because there is not any concrete mechanism available to direct their work smoothly. (IOP5)

In essence, the incompleteness of local legal systems in both areas of child care and protection and the social work profession, was expressed by research participants, mostly by IO interviewees. They highlighted the lack of a comprehensive legal framework, which created difficulties and challenges in operating professional services for disadvantaged children and social work development. This has been a continuing concern since social work was reintroduced in Vietnam in the late 1980s. In order to address this problem, much effort in advocacy work with local governments is required.

4.2.1.2 The Lack of Social Policies and National Programs

The lack of social policies, as well as of national programs for child protection, was another concern of the research participants. For them, this has strongly affected the development of professional services. This is especially important because in order to fit in with the local highly structured society, the flow of work must be consistent from the central to the grass-root levels.

Touching on the issue of the absence of an implementation planning policy for children, IOP6 confirmed that she had not seen any social policy documents. This raises the question of whether there is a problem either in policy implementation on a practical level or whether IO staff have no access to local policies. A different IO was worried about the insufficiency of a directive policy in implementing case management in SPCs, fearing this would ruin their efforts to introduce this professional process. This

example illustrates how the lack of guiding policies from the central government impacts on social work practice.

With the case management work, I am not entirely convinced that people are going to be implementing case management in their SPCs until another directive in a circular comes down saying SPCs have to do it and these are the forms that they have to use. (IOP3)

Research participants from an IO voiced the difficulty that many social entrepreneurs were facing. They said that they have worked with the Vietnamese Association of Social Entrepreneurs in an effort to advocate for supportive policies. However, they have not yet been successful.

At present, our enterprise tax is the same as the normal enterprises. There is no priority at all. (IOP10)

There is no tax exemption. We even have to pay a higher tax. (IOP8)

Hence, for a newly developed model, such as the social entrepreneurs, this is a big challenge. Consequently, it may not encourage the development of this service for vulnerable children.

The paucity of national programs in child care and protection was also mentioned as an obstacle in practice. As was previously presented in Section 1.3.3, Vietnamese society is very structured and the organisational system is tightly constructed from the central to the grass-roots levels. Therefore, the flow of guidance is expected to come from central to local levels. If there are no national programs, local action is rarely taken. This was well explained by LPP14.

Other fields all have national programs. They are provided with a framework, but the child protection program has no framework. Most recently, there has been a program called the first five-year child protection program, which was newly approved. However, in reality, there is no framework for local implementation. (LPP14)

Generally, the emphasis of research participants on the lack of social policies and national programs has revealed challenges in service implementation, particularly at the grassroots level. This has caused obstacles for developing new service models for disadvantaged children. Thus, much attention is required in designing social policies and a national program framework, which can help to guide the local governments and encourage new social service models.

4.2.1.3 System Problems

System issues emerged as problems in the interviews with both IO and LP staff. These were defined as the gaps between social policies and practice and the administration apparatus. The first system problem was named 'the asynchronous system', meaning that there were problems with connection and sometimes conflict occurring in the system. This has created a barrier to the launch of new social service models.

The interview with IOP6 provides evidence of how system problems prevented the introduction of a foster care model for orphaned children and children in difficult circumstances. She noted that the administration at the community level, through a rigid management system requiring regular registration, did not support foster children accessing community services. In her organisational program, children from a SPC, who were placed in foster families, could not access support services, such as education or social allowance, in the foster families' communities. This was because their registration with the foster families was temporary. For example, some of the children could not be enrolled in the community kindergartens or get the protection allowances. This raises the question of how to meet the needs for and the rights to education of children in foster care. IOP6 said:

It is very difficult to get regular social protection policy and education services. The gaps are in the systems. (IOP6)

IOP2 raised difficulties with the management mechanism, which does not allow other sectors to be involved in some service activities. In her story, it was her organisation's inability to accommodate ombudsmen into the local services. She described:

We supported a civil organisation in fulfilling its role in monitoring and evaluating child rights. When we came up with designed steps and standards for monitoring ombudsmen, the Vietnamese partner said they could not apply them. This was because they did not have this role in a non-government organisation. (IOP2)

In short, in assessing local capacity, research participants have spelled out the challenges that the social work profession is facing during the professionalisation and the introduction of their services. This is particularly hard work in the context of highly politically structured society. The kernel of the discussion centred on the incomplete

judicial system as well as the lack of social policies, and system problems. This raises the issue for both IOs and particularly LPs of how to improve the legal system and social policies in order to create a favourable platform for professionalising services.

The next section provides further analysis on the gaps in the organisational structure that influence professional service development.

4.2.2 Structural Gaps in Child Care and Protection

Structural gaps were created by changes in the local organisational structure of child care and protection systems. Before 2003, there was a National Committee on Child Care and Protection, which then merged with other fields and became the Committee on Population, Families and Children (CPFC). However, the CPFC was dissolved in 2007 and consequently all of its established systems, from the central to grass-roots level, were dismantled. Since 2007 child care and protection tasks have been assigned to the MOLISA. For many IO and LP interviewees, this change has created problems in the local capacity for service delivery for children in need. These structural gaps are unpacked under three points.

(1) The first concern is the dramatic cut in the number of staff, which reduced from three people in charge of child care and protection in a community to only one. At present, child care and protection is one of the nine tasks that a community worker is mandated to do. Ironically, the number of children in special circumstances is rising and their problems are at an increasing level of complexity. These require more professional services in order to meet the comprehensive needs of vulnerable children. IOP4 and IOP14 noted these problems.

The capacity of human resources is too weak, and even weaker after the dissolution of the Committee on Population, Family and Children. At present, in all 400 districts there are no staff assigned full time work in the area of child protection. (IOP4)

Children have other special needs, such as recreation and especially the need for counselling services when they have psychological difficulties. However, who will provide these services while the personnel is getting smaller and smaller? (IOP14)

IOP14, who has 15 years of experience in the child care and protection field, has witnessed all the system changes. She started her work at the beginning of the first

National Child care and Protection Committee, and continued under the National Committee on Child Care and Protection. She also continued her cooperation with the CPFC and recently with the MOLISA. She shared her sorrow caused by those changes. For her, changes in organisational structure were the hardest and most challenging for professional service development in Vietnam.

(2) Second, the structural system changes lead to negative impacts on facilitating the services for clients due to work overload. IOP1 emphasised:

It is also difficult when the local partners have too much work and are overloaded. They are also interested in working on service programs. However, because they have too many things to carry out, they cannot be engaged. (IOP1)

For LPP12, the lack of human resources was more serious in her mountainous province, where the community is twice the size of that in the Red River Delta. Thus, the problem of work overload is seen as a barrier to structural capacity, which limits the quality as well as the quantity of services for children. This problematic situation does not only occur with full time LP staff, but with the part-time community collaborators. LPP14 noticed that:

Community collaborators have to be involved in so many activities so they cannot dedicate all their time to our project. (LPP14)

The role of community collaborator has developed in Vietnam as a means of employing part-time staff at ward and commune level to provide direct services to beneficiaries. They are provided with a basic training and supported by officers of IOs and government departments (such as the DOLISAs).

An example is LPP15, a health care worker who participated in a community based child care project as a community collaborator. She said:

I have a lot of tasks, not just the project's tasks. We have to work in the evening, out of working hours, and on Saturdays, on Sundays. There is heaps of work. Right now, if you ask me to tell about my tasks, I cannot remember them all. (LPP15)

(3) Third, the shortage of qualified LP institutions is an additional problem for the structural system in facilitating professional development collaboration. Two IO interviewees disclosed their thoughts about this.

There are difficulties in finding partners who have adequate competence to provide social work services. (IOP12)

One of the difficulties during cooperation with some LPs is that I found that some universities themselves were not serious, not honest, and do not follow ethics in project implementation. They carried out project activities in a superficial manner. (IOP5)

Hence, lacking qualified partners has prevented them from operating a service model and achieving the desired objectives of their programs.

In short, gaps left by organisational structural changes in the child care and protection field has led to a weakness in human resources, such as staff cuts and work overload. Moreover, the difficulty in seeking professional qualified partners in the local system also concerned the research participants. This suggests that the local authority and LPs should take into consideration the need to fill structural gaps to meet the children's need for services.

To gain a better understanding of the situation of the professional work force, the next section provides IO and LP staff discussions on the weakness of professional human resources.

4.2.3 The Lack of Quantity and Quality in the Professional Work Force

The research participants identified the lack of quantity and quality in the professional work force as a 'common' phenomenon, which occurred at different working levels from communities to central government agencies. They openly discussed the current problems in human resource, which have become critical challenges in policy development and the provision of professional services.

4.2.3.1 Personnel Shortage

The research participants demonstrated their concern about the quantity of professional staff. They were worried that not having enough local staff prevented them from launching new models and keeping their programs sustainable. The statement below is from an IO officer who is a manager of regional program.

What can we do if we want to implement any model, any activity for local vulnerable children in the case of a lack of local staff? We know that the right

state management agency, which we should work with, is LISA, but they are too busy. They do not have enough staff. This has forced us to work with other bodies. Consequently, the sustainability of the work is not high. (IOP14)

The weakness in capacity has caused difficulties in practice. As three other IO interviewees said, they had to do the work for the LPs. This again poses the question of local accountability and knowledge transfer and indigenisation. IOP1 described the fact that if they were not involved in carrying out tasks, the work did not move. Consequently, they eventually had to implement tasks alone. Others complained that they had to do the project activities directly as their LPs did not do them. This points to the high risk of creating the LP dependency/passivity.

[This organisation] has to do some of the project activities by itself. Even though these activities are local recommendations, in which local partners propose for Vietnam. I think only Vietnamese can do it appropriately. However, I myself have to write the guidelines for local child protection system. (IOP4)

Actually, the officer at the DOLISA, I think she has too many tasks to do besides our programs. Thus she could not focus on our program, and we had to do all the work. (IOP19)

4.2.3.2 Lacking Qualified Professionals

Many IO officers admitted the lack of local qualified staff among their LPs, which was one of the weaknesses in the child care system. The following two IO interviewees frankly stated the problem of not having appropriately professionally trained LP staff, especially in the child protection area. They stated:

I think there are no staff who are professionally trained. I can confirm that there are not. It is very challenging for us. (IOP14)

I also want to mention the challenges in personnel, professional knowledge, and techniques because they do not have social work professionals, particularly in child protection. I think the greatest difficulty that Vietnam is now facing, is that they do not have professional social workers. (IOP2)

Consequently, this has affected the effectiveness of IO cooperation in introducing new services and carrying out their initiatives for disadvantaged children. This was a real concern for the majority of research participants when they responded to the question of professional human resources. The following comments are from an IO who described the difficulties her organisation had during the introduction of a service model.

When we introduce the model, we mainly train the collaborators and the State administrative officers. The State administrative officers do not have time to focus on services. And for the collaborators, they do not have the qualifications for delivering such professional services. (IOP2)

Other interviewees went further when analysing the local staff's lack of professional knowledge, such as social work and child rights. The local staff also had minimal practical skills in working with children, particularly abused, neglected, and exploited children. For example, IOP12 asserted:

The difficulty is that the staff from LISA lack a lot of skills in conducting child protection work. They deal with child protection issues but they do not have the skills to work with children. They even have no knowledge about child rights. So how can they protect [disadvantaged children]? I can say that there is a very large proportion of staff working in this field that do not have adequate working skills. (IOP12)

In addition, IOP14 acknowledged the problematic situation of a majority of direct service providers, who “work based on the spirit of volunteerism and with enthusiasm, but their knowledge is limited” (IOP14). This is affirmed by LPP15 and LPP6. LPP15, a community collaborator with more than 15 years of working at community projects, claimed her experience working with children was mostly accumulated through her direct community work. This is a typical portrayal of a service provider's capacity building in the social work area.

Indeed, I have not yet been given any special training or a degree program in community work. To work here, the first activity was to work with the community, and through my working process, I have learned. (LPP15)

This scenario is repeated in the case of another community collaborator on a different project site. She accepted the fact that her professional capacity was inadequate. She said: “I am very enthusiastic, but my level of knowledge is limited” (LPP6). These findings are consistent with previous findings from social work human resource studies which show a very high proportion of direct service providers carry out their tasks based solely on good hearts, their own experience and devotion to the wellbeing of their clients (Hugman et al., 2007; MOLISA, 2012a; UNICEF-Vietnam, 2005).

The lack of competent personnel has not just occurred in the field of direct service delivery, it also, of course, occurs at higher-level professionals. As IOP4 pointed out, there is a shortage of local professional experts.

There are many initiatives, but it is hard to find persons who are capable of helping the Vietnamese government. There are very few Vietnamese experts. Thus, the local professional resource is very limited. (IOP4)

For this IO, the lack of qualified social workers was seen as an obstacle for developing professional legal documents. Although both IO and LP participants acknowledged that creating a professional legal framework was very important for professionalisation, the question was: “who are the people that have enough qualifications to do this task?” (IOP4).

The following comment comes from an IO international officer. She experienced difficulty during her work with a government department where she could find only minimal technical input on the policy development work. Whereas in her several past working positions with government agencies in other countries, she could seek technical support from local experts.

Within the Department, really, I suppose they lack of a lot of technical expertise, apart from a few people who are very knowledgeable about the work that they are doing. Generally, they are not technical experts. (IOP3)

The shortage in local capacity was also raised by LP counterparts. LP interviewees thought that the lack of local social work personnel was a big challenge. For example, LPP9 and LPP8 explained:

There are serious limitations in professional capacity. This, therefore, results in a lot of time taken to address the issues in the development of social work personnel in the locality. (LPP9)

We have encountered two difficulties: One is the capacity of project management and second is the capacity of service provision. (LPP8)

Due to a lack of professional knowledge, the policy makers rarely paid enough attention to foreseeing and addressing other higher needs, such as psycho-social concerns. Instead, they could only see the need for food and clothes. In consequence, these issues were not covered in current social policies. This was raised by IOP14.

If at the beginning they [the policy makers] have understood child protection problems and looked at children’s needs, the situation would be different. But they did not see all the needs. To other needs, such as the psychological, they were blind. (IOP14)

The understanding and qualifications of local leaders who participated in community-based child care and protection systems, particularly at grass-root levels also identified as a worrying issue by LP interviewees. For example, LPP17 noted:

The first challenge is the local people's understanding, for example, that of the ward leaders and members of steering committees. They have not yet been trained in the profession. (LPP17)

The limit in local capacity that arises from working in a foreign language was identified as a further challenge in human resources by an IO and two LP interviewees. They shared their view on this concern of facilitating the knowledge sharing process. One endorsed the fact that there were staff assigned to work with international partners who could not speak English. Others claimed that some of their staff were in mountainous areas, a difficult context. As well, they indicated that some staff were older and could hardly be expected to learn a foreign language. This prevented the local staff from updating their knowledge and skills in the profession. IOP5 claimed:

One of the difficulties of our organisation in supporting the social work team is that their foreign language capacity is very weak. It is a challenge for [this organisation] when we invite international volunteers to come and work with them because their English capacity is very poor. Therefore, the process of knowledge and experience sharing is not effective. (IO 5)

Generally, in the words of the research participants, the weaknesses in both the quality and quantity of social work human resources were presented to give a picture of local professional capacity. The lack of staff, local experts, and trained professionals has challenged the development of professional services. It is also important to note the negative influences of work force limitations on the process of knowledge sharing and indigenisation.

In this section, three areas of concern for local capacity have been discussed. They were: incomplete professional legal support and social policy systems, the structural gaps in the local child care and protection systems, and the lack in the quantity and quality of the professional work force. The first concern that was pointed out by the participants was the shortage of comprehensive and compatible legal framework within and between domestic and international legal regulations. Importantly, many comments emphasised the absence of a systematic legal corridor for social work professionalisation, particularly in establishing professional service models for

disadvantaged children. The second concern addressed the structural gaps in the local child care and protection system. As was noted by many IOs, these problems resulted in the cut down of staff and heavily affected the quality of work. The third concern tackled the current local problematic situation of professional human resources, which could not provide adequate quantity or quality of professionals at various working levels. It should be noted that these difficulties challenge the professionalisation of social work as well as IOs' introduction of services. Noticeably, IOs and LPs should take into account the risk of creating LP dependency on IOs. Moreover, they also obstruct professional indigenisation that will be addressed in Chapter 8. Nonetheless, not only the weakness in local capacity should be taken into account, but also IOs' capacity.

However, as the IOs have realised the gaps in local professional capacities of social work knowledge and skills, they have created empowerment strategies to support the development of LPs. The following section presents the IOs' empowering process, which centres on awareness raising and capacity building.

4.3 Empowerment

4.3.1 Raising Awareness of Government's Leaders and People

The first strategy that IOs have used to empower their LPs is raising the government leaders and community people's awareness about social work and professional services for vulnerable children. There is a wide consensus on the part of both LP and IO research participants on the importance of awareness raising, particularly for leaders and local people. Therefore, IO activities aim to bring changes in local perceptions about social work and the need for professional intervention in child care and protection. As IOP15 noted, "what we mainly did first was to raise the awareness of the citizens and local officials" (IOP15). This was acknowledged by the LP interviewees. LPP10 said the leaders' perception is extremely important and they sometimes had to "improve the leaders' understandings" (in Vietnamese "nâng cao

quan tri”⁵). For one LP interviewee, this related to the political aspect of good leadership.

Briefly speaking, raising awareness is an issue in the political system, which strives to influence the executive leadership in child care and protection. (LPP3)

To raise the government leaders’ awareness, IOs have adopted a number of initiatives. Some organisations invited leaders and senior officers to take part in overseas study trips. They visited countries where social work is well developed, like the United Kingdom, Australia, Sweden, and the USA. They also studied other countries which share some similarities with Vietnam in culture, politics, and economic status, like the Philippines, China, and Russia. Others provided chances for local leaders to attend domestic and international conferences and workshops. Besides that, they also sent international and national experts to work side by side with local agencies, especially at the ministry level, such as at MOLISA, MOHA, MOH, the Ministry of Justice, and the Ministry of Police in order to enhance their local counterparts’ professional perceptions.

LPP2, who is a section chief of a social work department at a ministry, showed his appreciation with IOs in strengthening the local partner’s knowledge and awareness through various activities.

First, they organised study visits for us to learn experiences of the countries with high social and economic development, such as Australia, the USA or England. Second, they helped to conduct conferences and through these conferences, local officers in other fields, such as in healthcare and education know much more about the social work profession. These are very useful techniques in raising local awareness in social work. (LPP2)

For this LP interviewee, thanks to the IOs activities, LPs became more active in organising their overseas study tours to other countries. This is a valuable in opening up the minds of senior officers about social work.

IOs not only increased the LPs’ awareness by conducting overseas visits or conferences, they also helped to change local perceptions about social work by

⁵ This phrase, when it is translated into English has lost some of the meaning. Thus I kept the quote in Vietnamese. This phrase both literally and figuratively meanings emphasises the need for changing the mindset or perceptions of local leaders.

engaging with the local agencies' activities. LPP4 stated that IOs have improved the community officials who directly participated in the projects. He confirmed:

They are really contributing to enhance their understanding about the social work profession. (LPP4)

An IO participant seemed very pleased with the positive changes in perception on child protection from their local partners.

The local officials' way of working is different since [this organisation]'s cooperation was established. Their way of seeing professional work is different as well. They became more interested in and now value the child protection system. (IOP15)

Interestingly, the child help line (CHL), which was introduced by one of the studied IOs, is selected as an evidence-based service model for informing high-ranking leaders about child abuse. In this model, child abuse reports are directly transferred to the Minister of MOLISA and the National Assembly members in charge. This information has a strong impact on high-ranking leaders and increases their awareness of child issues and professional services for disadvantaged children. The vice-director of a centre in a ministry, who is also in charge of this service affirmed:

It [Child help line] is an example of the right way to raise awareness. When they [the high ranking leaders] see the monthly reports, they know what the emerging issues are in child protection. (LPP9)

The research also sheds light on the participants' emphasis on IOs' work in raising awareness for the public through public information sharing. An IO participant, who is a regional unit manager, shared that her organisation's project had achieved a good result in raising the awareness of the community about child rights, especially the rights of children with disabilities. The project began in 2005. At that time many families with children with disabilities in the communities tried to not to release any information about their children. However, the situation has changed. She noted:

We supported the community collaborators in organising public information sharing about children's rights in general and the rights of children with disabilities. A year later, community people, particularly parents of children with disabilities changed their attitude. They are open to sharing their children's information. And importantly, they seek professional support. (IOP14)

Knowledge transfer has also created changes in local awareness about child issues and problems. Locals now know how to identify the groups of children in difficult circumstances and those children who need professional support through the projects.

In short, in the plight of the newly developed social work profession in Vietnam, it is necessary to focus on professional awareness raising. As stated by many IO and LP officers, IOs have been involved in conducting many activities to create changes in the awareness of the local leaders, community staff, and the general community about child protection and their professional needs. This is seen as an effective strategy which helps empower the local leaders from government to provincial and communal levels and service providers in the social work profession and the child protection field.

4.3.2 Capacity Building

In line with the strategy of raising awareness, IOs have been introducing a variety of capacity building activities for local staff and community collaborators in their empowerment process. This section presents research participants' opinions on strengthening local capacity, which include conducting social work training courses and providing direct supervision via on-the-job training.

4.3.2.1 Conducting Training Courses

The most popular activity for strengthening the capacity is conducting training courses. According to the research participants, such courses were always included in the projects as a crucial component. There was short-term and long-term training conducted for local partners. The short-term courses last from three days to two months while the long-term courses are more than three months. The objectives of training are to provide local staff with social work knowledge and skills and to teach them new professional approaches and the methods of managing new service models. Although the social work profession has been only recognised formally in Vietnam only since 2010, IOs professional short-term training for local staff was conducted during in the late 1980s and the early 1990s. IOP6 said that her organisation's involvement in professional improvement for service providers at the Centre for Orphanages and Malnourished Children in Hanoi began shortly after their cooperation was set up 20

years ago. Since then, social work interventions have been applied in providing care for children at this centre. However, because this information was not shared, few professionals, including international and domestic organisations knew about it. She noted:

Before the social work profession was recognised, [this organisation] had conducted social work training for staff at the centre. And we even paid for hiring a social worker at the centre. This person is in charge of assessment and finalising children's profiles. (IOP6)

There have been hundreds of training courses carried out since the reintroduction of social work at the end of the 1980s. An IO staff acknowledged:

There are many different training courses conducted relating to child protection and social work in general by our organisation. (IOP2)

LPP14 described the training process, which began from the stage of handing over project managing skills then progressed to training and site visits. More importantly, she mentioned that the more knowledge and skill the local staff and volunteers gained the less involvement was needed by IOs in the direct work.

Training is also essential when IOs want to introduce new models. IOP2 stated that what they often did when launching a model was providing training and guidelines, which she called "technical support" (IOP2). Besides that, they regularly sent their officers to project sites to provide direct technical guidance.

In regard to the content of training, from the researcher's observations, at the beginning of the early 1990s and the 2000s, short-term training courses mainly provided basic social work concepts and skills. Gradually, they have covered different social work methods, such as working with individuals, group work, and community work. More recently, with great emphasis from UNICEF, case management was added in a series of training courses for officers from LISA, staff working in SWSCs, SPCs, and community collaborators. While it is beneficial to conduct such forms of specific training in social work, there is a concern of causing misunderstanding about the profession as many people who do not have a background in social work will see social work as case management only.

IOP17 provided a detailed description of how social work skills are transferred, such as how to collect clients' information, to make observations or to write reports to be transferred to direct service providers.

In the centre we provide training for service providers on reporting skills. We guide them on how to make observations, gather information, and use report forms. (IOP17)

Apart from providing general training about social work, some IO programs have incorporated specialised knowledge and skills, such as counselling for particular types of clients. IOP14 said:

In our projects, we have done a lot in supporting the training of a network of counsellors. The staff were trained with skills in working with street children and providing counselling and support for the children. (IOP14)

IOs offered training to a range of services and groups. This is described by two IO interviewees.

We included capacity building component for local officials, volunteers, collaborators in the locality, and also for the core children group. The trained children play an important role in conducting public education and information sharing after the training. (IOP15)

A lot of training was conducted with the participation of community leaders such as the presidents of the People's Committees or the chief of ULISA. (IOP12)

To deal with the lack of human resources when conducting projects in communities, many IOs projects wisely chose to involve the community collaborators. However, they faced a large challenge, as most of those community volunteers had not yet been professionally trained. Many of them had only just finished secondary or high school. Two IO interviewees talked about their training programs for community collaborators.

The training on the rights and obligations of children has one section that integrates skills in working with children. (IOP15)

Through that project we also trained a network of community collaborators in order to provide rehabilitation services as well as consultations for families about the rights of children with disabilities. (IOP14)

The training for these LPs focuses on professional skills. A collaborator from a community clinic shared her appreciation of the benefits that she gained from IO

training in rehabilitation, which enabled her performing her tasks. Notably, at the beginning, she did not have any specialised skills.

We were provided with training with in-depth knowledge and, particularly, practical skills. I am lucky to learn professional skills, which improve my service for the children in this clinic. (LPP15)

One very interesting aspect of capacity training for community-based child care and protection projects is that children were invited to be involved in supporting other vulnerable children and conducting public information sharing. This reflects the effort to implement child participation rights and to apply a peer support approach to children. In this project, children are given the chance to attend professional training on child rights and obligations, the prevention of child abuse, communication skills, and life skills. Interestingly, in accordance with the issues and problems, new areas of training are covered.

We provide training for children and adults at the community volunteer network on information collection skills, reports, and communication. (IOP13)

In recent times, when school violence has become increasingly widespread, they are provided with life skills in preventing school violence. (IOP15)

For all of the interviewed volunteer children, participating in projects, and particularly in training, was a great chance for them to learn knowledge, skills, and especially to display their potential. The following statement is from a teenage girl who participated in the community-based child protection system. For her, being a project volunteer has given her a great opportunity to help other friends. She said:

Firstly, to participate in this project we underwent a training course. The organisation came and taught us important skills. We learned how to organise games, how to raise issues and ask questions, and invite other children to answer questions. (GD3)

Foster parents also play an important role in helping children, thus the IOs see the need to train these care givers. IO interviewees reported their activities to help their caregivers in foster homes through training and talking with foster families. Their goal was to impart general knowledge and skills on caring for children. For example, IOP18 stated:

We organise workshops for the foster families, provide training, and update them on a new emerging child care and protection issues quarterly. Normally,

in each workshop or training session, foster parents are encouraged to learn and share practical experiences. (IOP18)

Initially, IOs invited international experts to deliver training for staff working in the field of LISA and mass organisations, such as the Women's Association and the Youth Union. Recently, there was a joint effort between international and national experts. Many LP staff appreciated learning from international experts and national consultants. LPP7 shared:

Actually, whenever we work with international organisations including foreign experts or international representatives, we can learn a lot about methods, problem identification, and their way of thinking. (LPP7)

Many IOs have applied the model of 'training of trainers'. It is a useful technique in increasing the number of trained local staff. And it is a good knowledge transferring process LPP15 said:

They [IOs] provided us with training on professional knowledge and skills, and also on how to design a lesson plan and presentation. I became the trainer for other colleagues, as well as for parents of children with disabilities. (LPP15)

From the LPs interviewees' perspective, training for local staff was highly appreciated. When being asked about how useful the content of training was for them, they said that it was interesting and helpful to their work. And what they felt very useful was that the knowledge they had attained was generated from research.

Clearly, providing training is an applicable solution for local partner capacity building, particularly in the context where social work is newly developed and its human resources are minimal. Nonetheless, it should be noted that the content of these training courses must be adjusted to fit with the local partners and the local vulnerable children's needs. Moreover, it is also necessary to mobilise local knowledge and skills.

4.3.2.2 On-the-job Training

On the job training is another method IOs have adopted to enhance the LPs' capacity. By working closely with LPs, IOs experts and staff have gradually transferred professional knowledge and skills to their local counterparts. Many LP participants had positive comments on the knowledge and skills they gained through participating in IO

projects and programs and working side by side with IO international consultants and staff. A head of a division in a department from MOLISA spoke of how she was more aware of a professional approach in her management work by learning from an international expert, although at the beginning she did not understand what the international expert's aim. She did, however, understand at the end and she was very grateful for the support she received.

I have learned a new approach, which I can apply in my local work. I have realised that this approach is very effective. (LPP10)

The stories from other two local staff illustrate clearly the effectiveness of on-the-job training. LPP11 described how she learned to do skilful child need assessments and changed her way of working. LPP7 spoke about how he learned during implementation.

During the time we were implementing service models for children in special circumstances, I was lucky to work with other IO officers. And they were very good at conducting needs assessments, need identification, and how to evaluate the need satisfaction of children. After that, my need assessment skills were improved. (LPP11)

When we worked with IO staff and experts, we gained more than we lost. In dealing with some child issues and problems, at the beginning we thought that were quite simple. However, we worked together in re-identifying and reviewing these problems, which helped us to gain better problem solving methods. I appreciated this learning opportunity. (LPP7)

The provision of direct supervision for staff in reform schools for children in conflict with the laws helped to improve their working skills with these disadvantaged children. This is a new professional area in Vietnam and an important one, as many people still have a stereotypical view of these children.

Dr. D [a local expert] came to supervise and coach local partner service providers by listening to their counselling or there were cases when she directly counselled and provided modelling. So we conducted those projects relatively professionally. (IOP14)

Capacity building is not just understood through providing training courses. One LP interviewee also suggested that the provision of resources, such as books or technology, was important. LPP15 commented that the books were very useful as they were written based on field trips and surveys to families. These were resources that could be of benefit to her clients.

Projects have provided a lot of resources. After conducting projects, we received many very good reports, reflections and books. We give the books to clients' families so that they can have information. (LPP15)

This section has presented the participants' responses to the question of how IOs have improved capacity building in their empowerment process for the local counterparts. Many training courses, mostly short-term, were conducted. The latest figures announced in the Conference on the Review of the Implementation of the National Program on Development of Social Work 2010-2014 conducted by MOLISA in the 1st of August, 2014, show that around 13,000 local leaders, staff and collaborators have attended social work training courses (MOLISA, 2014a). A large proportion of this trained workforce is supported by IOs. Capacity building activities are highly appreciated by both the LP and IO participants. However, the question of whether these short-term training activities can help to build a professional team is important. According to the evidence from this present research's observations, most of the knowledge and skills provided in those courses is fragmented and not systematic. Many local staff have been attended a number of training courses; however, according to their views of these courses, they need more than that. They also think that it would be helpful for IOs and local authorities to develop a long-term strategy for capacity building. Moreover, there is a concern about the waste of investment in conducting so many training courses with the same content for the same participants. Participants see that there is a need to manage the content of the training better and to improve its quality.

In summary, IOs' empowerment strategy aims at raising the LP's awareness and strengthening their capacity. First, IOs are regarded as having paid great attention to changing the local leaders and officers' perception about the social work profession and the need for professional interventions in child care and protection. A wide range of awareness raising activities was employed, including conducting overseas field visits, attending international and national conferences and workshops, and providing evidence to the National Assembly and high-ranking leaders. The general community was also provided public information sharing of professional knowledge. Second, to strengthen local capacity, IOs also conducted training courses, utilised on-the-job training and provided resources. IO's empowerment received positive responses from

the research participants. Nonetheless, there are concerns around this initiative, particularly how to transfer the correct and appropriate knowledge and skills for LPs and local people. It is also important to take into consideration carrying out more activities which will help to mobilise the local knowledge and skills.

The next section provides concrete evidence of positive professional changes.

4.4 Changes in Local Competence

This section explores the changes participants said they experienced and that were revealed through the document analysis, as a result of the empowerment process. Changes have been found in legislation and social policies, through the development of national child protection programs, the improvement of human resources, and the enhancement of professional awareness and understanding.

4.4.1 Changes in Legislation and Social Policy Development

The first change noted by the research participants was at the macro level in some aspects of legal and social policy development despite the fact that there are still problems and challenges existing as mentioned in Section 4.2. IOs' contribution was acknowledged in the development of child-rights based laws, other legal instruments and procedural guidelines. Social work approaches to children's issues are gradually being included in many laws. In the past, children were regarded as the property of their parents and child rights were not understood. The introduction of social work has been accompanied by greater application of the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which are now seen as underpinning law and practice. There are 15 national laws which regulate the child care and protection field (see Appendix H). Most of these laws have been issued and revised in recent decades with some support from IOs. There were three IO interviewees who commented that IOs has been paying special attention to supporting the government in developing legal documents related to child affairs. IOP2 spoke about their involvement in reviewing the law on protection, care, and education of children issued in 2004. The aim of this revision was to introduce regulations on professional services for child protection.

The law [on protection, care and education of children] must provide clear regulations on how the service system offers protection services for children. It

must also identify the roles and functions of institutions that deliver those services and, at the same time, set professional standards for providing services. (IOP2)

As a result, there is a significant change in how this law was built based on child rights. In the latest version of this law, the phrase 'child rights' occurs 58 times while in the old version it appeared only 23 times. There are 10 separate articles (from article 11 to 20) on child rights, including the rights to: (1) have a birth certificate and a nationality, (2) be cared for and nurtured, (3) live with parents, (4) be respected and have their body, life, dignity, and honour protected, (5) access health care, (6) gain an education, (7) enjoy recreational activities, cultural activities, arts, sports, and travelling, (8) develop their talents, (9) have their own premises, and (10) access information, express their ideas, and participate in social activities (VNA, 1991, 2004). Additionally, IOP1 also noted that her organisation was also involved in the revision of other laws toward child centred legislation.

In criminal law, we are concerned with reducing the imprisonment of children. We also supported the review and adjusted the laws and contributed to repair the anti-human trafficking law. (IOP1)

Working in the area of adoption, IOP6 stated that her organisation had been involved in advocacy and providing professional input for the law on adoption. For her, the most important thing that her organisation contributed was to include the social work perspective. She shared:

From the view of the social work profession, we treat adoption as an issue with human, social, and legal aspects. The Ministry of Justice develops it based only on the legal aspect. It is good but not enough. Therefore, we try to improve it by providing professional input. (IOP6)

The second change that was recognised was in the field of social policy development. Here, a progressive step in social policy development for disadvantaged children was gained. This paved the way for professional practice. For example, IOP21 shared her appreciation of the work of UNICEF in advocacy in issuing Circular 23 on prevention and treatment for children who are victims of sexual abuse. This is a very important government document that regulates support to sexually abused children. Moreover, IOP1 also noted that her organisation's project aimed at setting a professional ground for child protection policies and strategies.

Our project focuses on developing a foundation or framework for the protection of children. [This organisation] also supports the government in their adoption of a guideline for children in special circumstances. (IOP1)

Furthermore, based on their successful models, IOs have helped the government to issue social policies, such as government circulars or decrees to regulate care services for disadvantaged children. The government circular number 04/2011/TT-BLDTBXH on the Minimum Care Standards for SPCs for children is an example. In this circular, a six-step procedure of care for clients is proposed, that sets the requirements from admission to termination and community integration. These requirements are similar to intervention steps in casework. The circular also includes regulations related to rights based on social work principles. They are the right to: (1) participate in care planning, (2) make their own decisions on integration, and the safety plan, (3) be informed of the care standards and related government social policies, (4) access personal information and confidentiality, (5) discuss their ideas about the centres' regulations, (6) be involved in daily activities of the centres, (7) have public holidays, (8) participate in lectures, study tours, and education activities, and (9) participate in their family ceremonies (MOLISA, 2011b).

In order to have effective social policies, special attention has been paid to the bottom-up process of policy development. LPP2, who works in a government department, described in detail how IOs supported his department to develop social policies in child protection. According to him, in the first step, IOs were engaged to provide technical support through inviting international experts and consultants. These IO experts participated by conducting surveys about the current situation of policy implementation with children in special circumstances. Then in the second step, IOs helped to organise consultative workshops and seminars to get feedback from different stakeholders of the policies. And after the policies were issued and put into practice, IOs continued their support by reviewing and revising these policies. The following quote is an example of how an IO provides support in building foster care policies.

[This organisation] provides support in policy development by sharing their technical documentations and practical learned experiences from their projects on foster care, which were launched in a number of localities in Vietnam. This

has provided our department with sufficient factual practical input to build a more comprehensive policy in alternative care. (LPP2)

Responses from LPP3 and LPP8 also acknowledged the IOs technical and financial support in policy development, particularly in issuing the Decree 67/2007/NĐ-CP in 2007. This Decree regulates the supportive policy for social protection clients, including children in difficult circumstances (GOV, 2007).

In short, the first changes that were created are improvements in legal and policy development. There have been 95 government directives, decrees, circulars, and decisions on child care and protection, mostly issued during 2001-2011 (68/95) (see Appendix H). This was the time social work became an urgent need and received support from many IOs. Professional knowledge and approaches have been included in local laws and social policies, which help enable professional services for disadvantaged children. Importantly, many LP participants stressed the way in which IO support helps LPs to develop evidence-based social policies. Moreover, practical experiences from IO service models have been used in producing policies to meet local needs and professionalising services.

4.4.2 Developing National Programs

With the IO support, especially the active role of UNICEF-Vietnam, Vietnam recently launched national programs on child welfare, such as the first five-year National Programme of Action for Children, the National Child Protection Program 2011-2015—the first program which is believed to be bringing positive results in child protection (GOV, 2011), the National Action Program for Children 2012-2020, and the National Programme on Community-based Caring for some categories of children with specially difficult circumstances 2005-2010.

The National Program for Child Care and Protection 2011-2015 clearly states the strong message of protecting children from any harm and providing equal development chances for all children. It focuses on:

creating a safe, healthy living environment where all children are protected; proactively preventing, minimising, and eliminating the risk of harm to children; reducing the number of children in special circumstances and abused children; providing timely support and rehabilitation for children in special

circumstances and abused children; and creating opportunities for children's re-integration into the community and equal development. (GOV, 2011b, p. 1)

The National Action Programme for children 2012-2020 also confirms child rights, ensuring the good living environment for all children as well as enhancing their quality of life. Its aims are:

building a safe, friendly and healthy living environment to better implement the rights of children; gradually reducing the gap in living conditions of different groups of children and between the regions; and improving the quality of life and creating equal development opportunities for all children. (GOV, 2012, p. 1)

These are very important national programs that have helped to transform professional ideology into a nation-wide action plans. And this helps the local governments to introduce programs in child care and protection.

4.4.3 Human Resource Strengthened

IO awareness raising and capacity building have strengthened the local professional work force. Moreover, the professional understanding and awareness of social work services for disadvantaged children has been improved. Some parts of local staff have been equipped with professional knowledge and skills. Changes in human resources were also reported by the research participants. Noticeably, understanding child rights and child protection was recorded as improved, as stated by two LP interviewees.

There are positive changes in local perceptions of children's needs and protection, thanks to the IO public awareness raising programs. Thus, when the project was introduced, LPs became aware of child protection issue. (LPP16)

They [IOs] have created local awareness about families, children's psychology, and children's needs. (LPP13)

Additionally, the local way of thinking about children's care has changed. IOP6 noted: "all of our local partners agree that a family is the best environment for children" (IOP6). These comments reveal the crucial improvement in the LP's viewpoint about child care, particularly in the way in which children's best interests are embedded in local thinking.

Obviously, IO support in capacity building has also helped to enhance the LP staff's ability to smoothly carry out the project activities. LPP17 stated that through training, her LP working competence has increased.

All members of our program, from the managing officers to community collaborators, all know what to do. They know child protection criteria and these criteria need to be included in the economic and social plan, and mainstreamed into the local development plan. (LPP17)

LPP14 also valued and acknowledged the improvement in the local operational system in addressing child problems. In her community-based child care and protection project, teamwork was conducted effectively. All members shared responsibility. This had not occurred in the past, where people tried perform their tasks individually.

Now, we have a system of related sectors and organisations. People pay more attention to that and no longer see the work as the responsibility of only one single person. (LPP14)

Two other LP officers spoke about benefits that capacity building has given to their own work performance. This is especially so in the case of LPP15, whose background is in medicine. She said that attending conferences and professional training courses equipped her with professional knowledge and experience, which bolstered her work in the community.

I was trained in medicine. Thus, what has helped me fulfil my role in a community-based child care and protection project, was the knowledge and skills shared in IO capacity building activities. (LPP15)

LPP17 provided another example of human resource improvement. This interviewee stated:

They [local staff] are strengthened, they open up, know how to work, and apply models they have learned from other provinces. When technical experts came, they were equipped with techniques that they had never previously accessed. (LPP17)

The story of a community policeman who participated in a community-based program for care and protection of children is evidence of how local capacity is strengthened through participating in a project. He stated that before joining the project, the way that he saw child abuse was different. However, through his participation, he started to change his way of helping children, and especially his point of view of child abuse.

Before [joining IO project], I worked in the role of a community policeman. I thought that problems with children were normal. It was normal for my neighbours to beat or scold their children. However, when I was equipped with the knowledge from the project, I changed. I now know that I need to intervene in those cases of abuse. I feel happy and useful when I can help children, and somewhat, reduce their unhappiness. (LPP16)

Children who participated in community-based child protection system also confirmed that they have gained more knowledge. Impressively, they all felt more confident in communication and talking in front of a crowd.

By participating in these activities I do feel that I have had a lot more useful knowledge about children. And when I was involved in the communication sessions, I felt much more confident and I have acquired communication skills. Previously, I was so afraid of standing in front of a crowd, but through many communication sessions I have reduced some part of that [feeling]. (GD3)

Like other friends, I am now able to speak in front of many people and am more confident. I have also gained new knowledge that I had never known before. (GD3)

A 16-year-old volunteer girl spoke of her change in seeing the root of her vulnerable friend's problem. Before joining the project she treated her friend's abuse by giving her comfort. She did not pay attention to the root reasons for the abuse, nor did she know how to counsel her friend to solve the problem. However, after her participation in the project activities, she was quite confident to share that she began to deal with her friend's abuse through the organisational social work system. This girl continued to talk about how the children's participation on the project had a positive effect on their parents. She believed that in general the parents of the children who participated were pleased with their maturity and confidence after being involved in project activities.

They [parents] see their children participating in social activities; they also feel happy as their children become more mature. Children are more confident. (GD3)

Notably, she said that she had changed her mind about her future career and would now like to become a social worker.

So I suddenly think that I will not become a lawyer, I will do social work. So I also have some sort of orientation for my future; or what I will do in the future. (GD3)

Another girl in this group talked about social aspect of the IOs contribution through capacity building. For her, it has created changes in Vietnamese perceptions.

I want to mention the knowledge they have brought for us that has made a change in many Vietnamese people's thinking. (GD3)

Thanks to joining the project, one boy has found his great value and responsibility providing a better life for disadvantaged children.

I found I have some responsibility, as I am better-off than them so I will try to do something. I will be a leader to contribute to the better life of disadvantaged children. (GD3)

The evidence provided by participants and through documents indicates that human resources have been improved through IO capacity building. The local awareness of knowledge about and skills for the profession have been enhanced and are appreciated by LP interviewees, particularly by the children who were involved in the IOs' projects in their communities. This is a vital step in promoting professional services for vulnerable children as well as the developing the social work profession in Vietnam. To provide more evidence for the changes in the social work, the next section investigates how IO support has affected the profession.

4.5 Social Work Profession Changes

Since social work was reintroduced in Vietnam in the late 1980s, with the support from IOs, it has achieved notable progress (Hines et al., 2010; Lan, 2010; Lan et al., 2013a). The researcher's observations recognise the active roles of IOs in social work education and the professionalisation process. Both UNICEF, and SC (previously Save the Children Sweden) enthusiastically participated in issuing the social work training code in 2004 and, with others, aided in delivering the social work job code. They are now also holding important positions in the national project on social work professional development.

The most significant change was the recognition of social work as a profession in 2010. It was a milestone year for the social work profession when the government of Vietnam approved Project 32. This project is seen as a comprehensive action plan for social work professionalisation. Most importantly, it stresses the importance of the

birth of social work and its contribution to Vietnamese wellbeing, especially that of vulnerable groups.

Since the initiation of this Project, there have been a number of government documents on promoting the social work profession, such as the assignation of a social work job code and detailed descriptions of social work positions. IOP1 noted that:

It [this organisation] helps Vietnam build a job code for the social work profession, the implementation program, and the national action plan on social work. (IOP1)

Furthermore, her organisation is also involved in the process of issuing a government circular on social work standards for social workers. This circular identifies three social work titles: the senior social worker, the social worker, and junior social work staff (see more details in Section 1.3.7 and Appendix C). IOP5 similarly expressed her organisation's input for social work policy development.

We also support the state in policy development and developing circulars, and decisions on social work. Actually it is hard to tell how much we contribute. But in the activities to issue a training code as well as a job code, there is contribution from [this organisation] at a certain level. (IOP5)

The contribution of IOs in their effort to institutionalise social work in many areas in Vietnam has been important. IOP4's quote tells of their work in helping the government to review human resources and identify social work positions in local agencies. They are now looking at developing the social work profession in other fields: health care and education.

With [this organisation]'s institutional support, there are many things that include the development of social work as a profession. Additionally, we have been supporting the government in reviewing the current work force in the field of LISA. We will do it in health care and education. (IOP4)

As such, the social work approach has been introduced in government circulars and decisions on children's care and protection. For example, in the MOLISA's Circular on the Minimum Standard of Care in SPCs, article 2 identifies six steps in case management: intake, assessment, care planning, plan implementation, documentation and termination (MOLISA, 2011b).

By introducing projects and models, these organisations also help to promote social workers' roles in dealing with social problems. As IOP5 pointed out:

Through building models of child protection it helps to enhance the role of social workers. By supporting pilot projects, we let the society, the people, as well as governments at all levels, understand the role of social workers. (IOP5)

LP interviewees acknowledged IOs' contribution to social work. One of the local leaders validated the IOs' roles in the development of social work. He noted that without IO support, social work would not have been recognised as a profession in 2010. Even had emerged then, without IO support, it would not have progressed to the level achieved in recent years.

The IOs and international individuals generally play the roles of pioneers in this [the social work profession] development in Vietnam. (LPP9)

These two participants identify the role of INGOs in a positive way.

I agree with [this organisation] that when they came to Vietnam, they brought social work knowledge and methods. (LPP4)

[This organisation] has also participated in activities in developing the social work profession in Vietnam; for example, providing financial and technical support in conducting the Launching Ceremony of the Project of Social work Development. (LPP2)

IOs' support in creating changes for local leaders, staff and community people in the social work profession has been recorded as a very important part of the history of professionalisation of social work in Vietnam. Changes have been achieved in setting up the professional framework, such as the recognition of social work as a profession, and instigating a job code and job descriptions for social workers in different positions. Moreover, social work has been expanded out from the area of LISA has been gradually introduced in different areas, such as health care and education.

4.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter has highlighted the situation of social work's local capacities and the IOs' contribution to empower LPs. Importantly, awareness raising and capacity building has played an important role in this process. Based on the assessment of local capacity, IOs have built up strategies to empower LPs. They have conducted many activities in raising professional awareness for local leaders, staff, and the general community, including facilitating overseas study visits, attending international and national conferences and workshops, and providing evidence to the high ranking officers. IOs introduced evidence-based approach in policy and service development. In addition, a

variety of capacity building methods have been employed to enhance the local professional ability, such as conducting training courses, facilitating on the job training, and providing direct work supervision. As a result, IOs have contributed to raise the LP understand and perception about social work and the needs of professional services in child care and protection. In addition, there appears to be widespread support for the view that a capacity building approach has provided crucial support to strengthen LPs' social work knowledge and skills. More importantly, the progress in the social work profession development is highly appreciated, particularly the key milestones, such as the recognition of social work as a profession, the issue of a job code, the job descriptions of social workers positions, and the inclusion of professional knowledge into regulations of service delivery. These developments are important underpinnings for introducing professional service models for disadvantaged children.

The next chapter provides an overall picture of IOs' involvement in service development.

CHAPTER 5

PROFESSIONALISING SOCIAL WORK SERVICES

5.1 Introduction

In the previous Chapter, the findings centred on local capacity and the process of how IOs empower local partners. It also explored contributions of IOs in legal and policy development, capacity building, and professional changes. This Chapter continues with an examination of the professionalisation of services for local disadvantaged children. First, it reflects on the process of developing professional programs and projects in which social work knowledge and principles are included. In particular, it analyses how a child rights-based approach was adopted. Second, it captures the introductory processes of a variety of child care and protection programs and models, including the social work service centres (SWSC), the community-based child care and protection system (CBCCPS), alternative care, vocational and life skill training, and outreach programs. These services play an important role in the process of professionalisation; they aim to improve vulnerable children's lives and prevent problems for children and their families. Each model is accompanied by the research participants' comments on the approach, main activities and service feedback as well as the challenges they encounter. These descriptions of the various programs are not at this point critically evaluative; critical reflections will be presented in later chapters.

5.2 Mainstreaming Social Work Values and Principles into Services

The important contribution in the area of service for disadvantaged children since the reintroduction of social work in Vietnam in the early 1990s is social work's input into service programs and models. The researcher's observations indicate that professional knowledge and values have become mainstreamed in policies and practice models. These include basic social work principles, such as, 'start where clients are', demonstrate 'acceptance', and 'strengths-based' and 'rights-based' approaches (AASW, 2002; IFSW, 2012; 2004). This is an encouraging move in the professional development in Vietnam where social work services are just at their formation stage. Additionally, social work content and methods, such as casework, case management,

and community development have been introduced and delivered by direct service providers.

The findings from interviews with IO and LP officers show the inclusion of social work from the design to the operation of IO programs/projects and services. IO responses provided clear evidence of social work application in the helping process. The principles of 'start where our clients are' and 'acceptance' are clearly present. As IOP10 noted, they often had to accept the behaviours of children who suffer from mental and intellectual development problems. She admitted that only by doing that could she support these children. A similar view was stated by her colleague:

There are children when they came here, they swore, used bad language, fought each other and even stole things. We had to accept all of this. We knew what circumstance they lived in, what their characters are. And the method that [this organisation] taught them was to show them those behaviours were inappropriate. (IOP8)

She and her colleagues started their helping process by following the principle of acceptance, through which they facilitated a gradual change in inappropriate behaviours. In order to do so, they were really "tuning into the clients' sense" (Shulman, 1984, p. 53) to fully understand the children's situation and the reasons that those children acquired bad habits. Another IO noted:

When I felt very discouraged and stuck in dealing with our children's rebellion, I read their profiles and imagined what I would do if I were in their situations. Then, I felt more sympathetic and could understand why they behaved like that. (IOP11)

This IO's story illustrates the way in which a professional should put herself 'in the position of clients' to have empathy with them, as Shulman (1984, 1999) suggests. By using a professional approach to helping children, IOP11 assisted them in changing their inappropriate actions.

Furthermore, in many programs and projects, social work empowerment and a strength-based approach were employed as directive guidelines. Two IO officers stressed the importance of these professional approaches in providing effective support for children. One IO officer stated that she:

helped them to explore what their strengths were and really sort of focused on their strengths and built on those and helped them to open the barriers that they built up between themselves and trust. (IOP16)

By mobilising clients' strengths, this officer had professionally mobilised the client's resources, especially encouraged their families' voluntary involvement in the problem solving process. This was confirmed by another IO:

Following the strength-based approach, we build our helping skills based on [the clients'] strengths and provide them with the tools so that they have work to do. (IOP6)

This participant further explained that her organisation's initiative in family preservation had mobilised the families' strengths and resources. In particular, with 'seed funding' financial support from this IO, families with disadvantaged children were able to invest in their own businesses to improve their situation. This serves the community development ideology of 'giving people a fishing-rod not just a fish', which in Vietnam, has the intention of helping clients to provide for themselves by creating work and business opportunities so they can earn their living and maintain their lives.

The principle of 'prevention', which is seen as a weak area in social services for vulnerable children in Vietnam, has been attended to and integrated into the programs. It has become the IO (E)'s philosophy. Two IO participants claimed that their program was built on the basis of multiple and preventive approaches to treatment. The first said:

When we develop our program, we have to connect and collaborate to provide a multiple service approach, especially in prevention. (IOP19)

This is a program for children in special circumstances, and their families, in a remote area in Hanoi. It is seen as a change in the helping perspective in Vietnam since, previously, treatment rather than prevention was considered the main focus of services (MOLISA & UNICEF-Vietnam, 2009). The second participant continued:

Our programs are connected with prevention. If the prevention fails, we will refer to the treatment and seek for different solutions. The service for single mothers is based on the principle and the philosophy that it aims at preventing child abandonment as soon as possible. (IOP6)

This comment concerns an outreach program for single mothers which was introduced to support these women to keep their infants in their families. This pro-active method aimed to eliminate the children's problems.

The principle of being 'client-centred' is also followed in order to benefit to vulnerable children. One LP emphasised that this principle was the key element that IOs, particularly UNICEF, Plan, and SC, brought to local thinking about child protection.

When they [IOs] launch projects in Vietnam, it must be child-centred and must embody the principle of the best benefits to children. (LPP8)

This principle is also shown in the way in which IO programs and projects are built based on the children's needs. With support from IOs, programs and projects for children were directed towards the correct orientation in providing for their real needs. As described by an IO project coordinator:

First, we have to survey the needs of the local community, especially the children's needs. (IOP18)

Many participants confirmed that this changed the local habit of working 'top-down' to working 'bottom-up' turning attention to needs assessment. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

IOs' social work services have also promoted advocacy for clients' rights and benefits. As one IO participant said:

There are cases that qualify within the social protection policy, but [the clients] cannot access the funds. It is our duty to influence the local officials because they may not know the situation or just they passively wait for the reports from a lower level. Then we have to work with them to help the clients get the allowance. (IOP6)

This story spells out how important the work of IOs and LPs is in advocating the rights and benefits of their clients. IOP6 stated that this principle became an especially important task of her organisation at the beginning stage of service development.

Additionally, the principle of promoting the right to participation (IFSW, 2012; IFSW & IASSW, 2004), which is stated by the IFSW and IASSW, was applied to service programs and projects. Children in IO programs were encouraged to participate in every aspect of the projects. Notably, they were also encouraged to voice their needs and access professional services. Moreover, these children were equipped with

knowledge and encouraged to take the role of information sharers for other children and the community. This has occurred across the CBCCPS. According to IOP15, children “work together with adult collaborators to jointly implement the activities”. Thanks to joining the projects, children stated that they felt valued. A boy in group discussion 3 confirmed: “It is good to have the children’s voice” (GD3).

Children are also given opportunities to participate and present their ideas in provincial and national forums. Their dialogue with the high-ranking leaders is a very important event for children. The national forum for children was: ‘The responsibility of children in building a safe and friendly environment’ in 2012, and ‘Children’s participation in revising the law on care, protection, and education for children’ in 2013. These activities facilitated the implementation of children’s rights to participation, which is the most challenged children’s right application in Vietnam. One boy who participated in the children’s forum said, “I found [it] very useful” (GD3).

Children who are the beneficiaries are also involved in building services for themselves. In the IO (D)’s model, children were provided with chances to meet and talk about their situation regularly and they were free to “raise their ideas directly and find a way to make a change” (IOP7). Thus, they were actively engaged in designing and carrying out the project’s activities. IOP10 noted:

Children are called on to prepare their plan. If the program belongs to students, they will make the plan and estimate how much money they need for each activity and then submit the plan to the Department of Students’ Welfare. (IOP10)

The comment above, from the IO who was in charge of welfare, describes how his organisation gave the children the right to decide the activities related to them. This not only demonstrates how they respect the children’s expertise, but also promotes children’s rights.

Children are not just involved in building the environment and legislation. They also are invited to participate in the development of the social work profession. IOP13 stated:

Last year there was a national workshop on social work. We invited children to present their ideas on the development of national strategic actions in social work. The voice of the children is important. (IOP13)

The ideas and comments collected serve as a valuable input for the social work profession since the voice and needs of clients were included in its professional development. This contributes to raising public awareness about the profession and challenges the old perception that devalues the children's voice.

In short, social work principles and values have been gradually introduced into IO service programs and projects for disadvantaged children and their families. This is seen as a key step in contributing to the change in the thinking and perception of policy makers and service designers in providing professional services with more attention paid by the local authorities to transforming social work theory into practice. Social services for disadvantaged children have a 'new face' that has changed from being close-ended approach in institutional care to being open to community integration. Nevertheless, whether these professional principles and values can be systematically applied to all models is a key question that needs to be addressed in order to have appropriate social work services for disadvantaged children.

The next section presents the details of service models.

5.3 Introduction of a Variety of Social Work Services

Research participants noted that social work service models have been introduced in a number of different forms in IO programs and projects. This has received increasing support from the government. In 2005, before formal recognition of social work, the government issued an official document supporting more types of care for vulnerable children. This is Decision 65/2005/QĐ-TTg, issued by the Prime Minister, which aims to change child care and protection from institutional care to alternative care in families and communities. In 2010, with the government approval of Project 32, social work services are recognised as a key component in the process of developing the social work profession (GOV, 2010a).

With the introduction of new techniques and finance support, social services for disadvantaged children and their families have been implemented in various forms, such as SWSCs, CBCCPS, alternative care, vocational and life skill training, and community outreach programs. IOs' involvement in the development of these services is presented next.

5.3.1 Social Work Service Centre (SWSC)

5.3.1.1 An Overview

The SWSC was born to meet the urgent need of professional care and protection for children and children in special circumstances. This model was developed in the context that disadvantaged children and vulnerable people at the provincial level could not access services provided by government managed protection centres, the provincial organisations or the few private homes that offered care. It was initiated by UNICEF in 2008 and officially approved by the Vietnamese government in 2010. At present, according to the Department of Social Protection, MOLISA, there are more than 30 SWSCs nation-wide (MOLISA, 2014a; Phư^ong, 2014). This service model is considered as one professionalising step in service development for disadvantaged children. IOP6 stated that such a model helped change misunderstandings about the social work profession. This is because there were concerns that social work would be confused with social protection. Thus, through developing a professional service model, people could see it “separate from the umbrella of social protection” (IOP6).

According to LPP1, the SWSCs were based on the three criteria identified by the MOLISA: the number of clients, socio-economic requirements, and staff capacity to ensure the feasibility of the implementation and deployment of the model.

Speaking of the reason for the formation of SWSCs, an IO stated:

I think it needs to answer to the question of how to provide support services for vulnerable groups, especially children with special circumstances in a professional manner. Moreover, caring for a child in the community is better than raising the child in the centre. So to do that task, there must be a social work system. (IOP4)

This IO officer spoke of how she and her organisation were concerned about developing a professional service that could address the most vulnerable groups in her community, such as sexually abused children, children in conflict with the law, and children with disabilities. It was important for her that those disadvantaged children and their families could be easily assessed. Therefore, the birth of SWSC model was an answer to the problem of the lack of professional services for vulnerable children. The IO assessed that this service was professional, could save costs and, particularly, was

seen as an improvement for children. Taking an example of children in conflict with the law, IOP4 explained that the solution of sending these children to reform schools did not benefit the children who often faced much discrimination during, and even after, they finished their schooling. What they needed was professional support at the community level where they could learn appropriate activities in their family and community environment. A different officer from the same IO added that the model could reduce the number of children being sent to reform schools. Preventing such an action required setting up community support services for those children. She posed a thorny question: “if there are none [no community services available] where will they go?” (IOP2).

For the LP participants, this model was the answer to helping children in special circumstances via professional approaches in which there was collaboration from many sectors at the community.

One single sector cannot meet vulnerable children’s needs. Therefore, we should build a pilot model [SWSC] to connect services. This model can help to connect all local institutions and agencies, including DOLISA which acts as a focal point for the coordination from provincial to district and communal levels. (LPP11)

Another LP, who works in a ministry, emphasised that meeting the comprehensive needs of disadvantaged children, was not only the responsibility of the MOLISA and DOLISA but also was involved medical, educational, and other sectors. The SWSC model has helped to tailor the network of related fields and disciplines in addressing vulnerable children’s problems.

Since the SWSC is a newly introduced model, there were different views from research participants about its conceptualisation. LPP13 believed that it should be put “under government management with collaborators as an extended arm to grasp the community situation” (LPP13). Another LP compared it with the traditional service model-SPCs and stressed its advantage in providing immediate and professional services. This LP officer stated:

SWSCs are different. They provide immediate services and clients go there for immediate solutions. Then they can be referred to other services. The best cases are when they are integrated into the communities, when they live in the community, particularly when people with disabilities are assimilated into the

communities. Orphaned children can also be integrated into communities. (LPP10)

In IOP6's thoughts, SWSCs played the role of a connector between different service resources.

When the centres have all the information from clients, they begin the screening process and make appropriate referrals to the network of service providers. The centres should know this service network. They also need to identify when to connect and who to connect with. (IOP6)

Hence, she argued that SWSCs must know other organisations' services very well. She thought that an SWSC should work as a focal point in the service system network, especially with the upper levels of management. In this professional environment, the role of social workers should not be at the state management level. In the SWSCs, social workers should be a bridge between clients and social policies as well as other community resources. According to her, the SWSCs provide a professional setting for social workers to perform their functions and tasks.

In regard to the services provided by SWSCs, the two directors of the pioneer centres in the central and northern areas said that they were assigned to provide a wide range of activities, such as counselling, disseminating information, developing networks, connecting services and mobilising resources. However, during the three field trips to these two centres, the researcher observed that the most successful services that these centres were engaged with were in relation to community knowledge sharing about social work and child issues and problems. They built up a network with community collaborators from different fields, such as those from the community authority, health care, education, legislation, the Women's Association, and the Youth Union. However, this network is only at the formation stage, and needs encouragement from the centres to provide more direct professional services in communities.

As noted by one director of the centre, the SWSCs were, at this stage, just focusing on prevention at level 1 of the services. They introduced services which include community awareness raising and community education on care and protection. These services promoted local social welfare policies and programs, introducing the social work profession to families and encouraging families to ensure their children are

protected. Whereas services at level 2 and 3 focus on in-depth professional knowledge and skills (see Figure 5.1) (H. L. Loan, 2012).

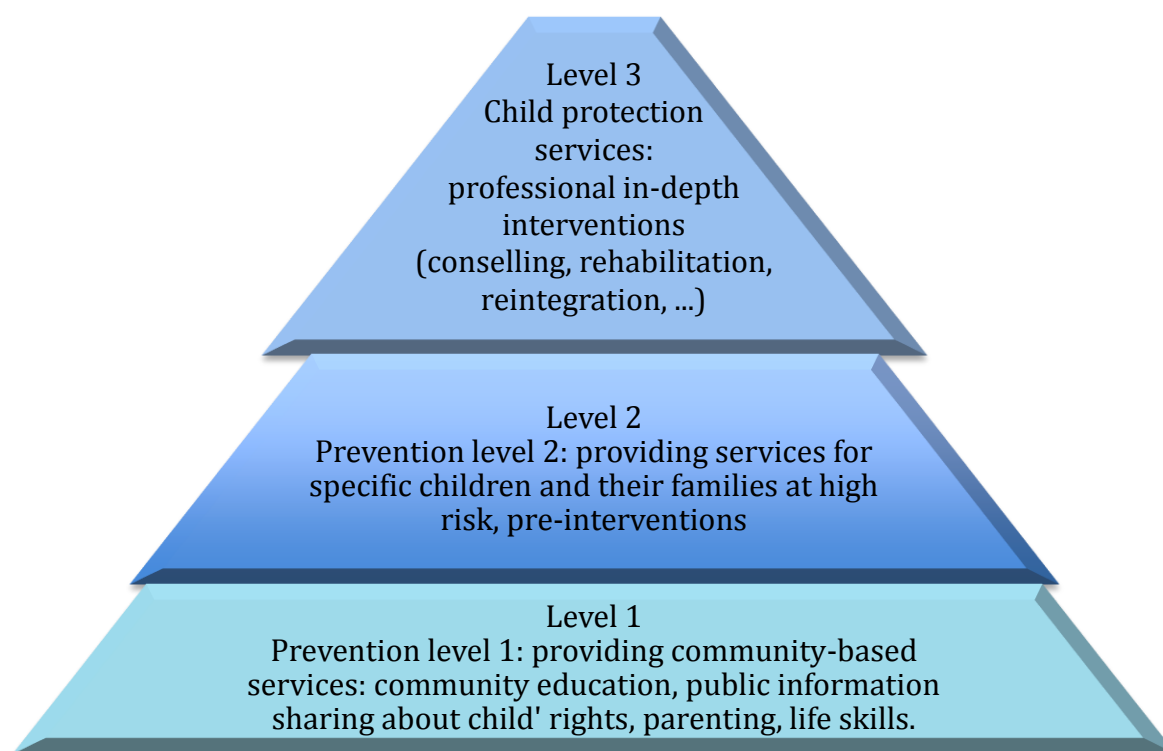


Figure 5.1: Three level-child care and protection services

LPP13 shared:

At the present, our centre is only involved in providing services at level 1, meaning that we are engaged in preventive work at communities. Thus, we focus mostly on public information sharing. However, we have not delivered services at level 2 and 3. Every month we have briefings, and we inform each other about the local situation. There are four cases reported a month. We are also involved in managing children who are at risk of dropping out of school. We have created awareness about families and children's psychology. (LPP13)

During their first two years, the centres focused on raising awareness about families, children's psychology, sharing knowledge and capacity building for community collaborators in case management. What this officer said shows it is a good start, however, this raises the question of future specialised services, such as counselling, family therapy or dealing with abuse cases. Moreover, the small number of reported cases raises another question: are cases being reported? If it is the situation that many cases still go unreported, there is much work for the SWSCs within the system.

5.3.1.2 Challenges

Being a new service, SWSCs face many challenges, including a lack of policies and orientation, a lack of structural conditions for model implementation, and limits in people's awareness about the model. As it was stated by IOP4:

There are many questions about the SWSC model that we have to address. For example, how are they designed? What services do they provide? How are they managed, and what are their financial mechanisms, their roles and positions in society? We are just at the beginning. It is at a very new stage, the future is still before us. (IOP4)

Answering these questions is the best way to respond to the concerns and scepticism about the social work profession. It is a significant task for LP authorities and practitioners to prove the effectiveness and benefits that professional services can bring to vulnerable people and communities. The following section presents three prominent difficulties that the SWSCs are facing.

(1) Speaking about their immediate difficulties, most participants showed their concern about the lack of guidance from higher-level management agencies. The general approach in Vietnam when there is a new model is that it comes with higher-level orientation and guidance. So for the provincial LP officers it is like proceeding without any instructions. By the time of data collection, the centre had been operating for about two years; however, many LP interviewees said that they did not know what the work was or how to do it. "They [provincial LPs] are waiting for the guidelines" (LPP9) and look for "policy orientation from the centre" (LPP7). This situation was best described by LPP13:

The centres [SWSCs] have not been bestowed with any rights, certificates or licenses. There are no regulations yet. Even the province and State have no regulations; there is no legal basis for the profession issued by the government, and no legal framework. So we cannot argue that there is any legal basis here. (LPP13)

One IO frankly complained about the slow process of the local authority organisation in developing guidelines for running the SWSC.

The progress is slow. In the last two years, they only introduced guidance for the establishment of the SWSCs. When reading the guidance, it is mainly about the setting up mechanism, the management board, and its dissolution. It does

not focus on providing professional orientations on service operation and delivery. (IOP12)

Without central orientation the local agency cannot operate all of its services and this has led to stagnation. SWSCs are at the stage of discovering a way forward for their operations and promoting their services to the general community.

(2) In addition to the first challenge of centrally oriented policies, the research participants also mentioned the difficulties in local structural conditions for launching this model. LPP10 spoke about their concern about not having a qualified work force and their inadequate financial resources.

There are difficulties in human and financial resources. And they cannot be addressed in a short space of time. It will take one year to two years to solve the difficulties. (LPP10)

As previously mentioned in Chapter 4, the lack of professional human resources prevents the expansion of the SWSC model. Moreover, since there is no clear financial policy that identifies the financial resources for the SWSCs, it is difficult for these centres to be established and run. There needs to be a financial mechanism set up to regulate the income sources for the SWSCs.

Furthermore, confusion over the local structure of establishing and managing SWSCs adds to challenge. LPP10 continued:

So at the present, there are some problems between these two types of social work service centres: the newly introduced SWSCs and the social work services centres for children and families that was set up in some places two or three years ago. At the provincial and district levels, these are confused. (LPP10)

This problem occurred because two models were initiated by the two departments in the same ministry, which resulted in minimal preparation for the establishment of SWSCs at lower levels. This is more critical when there are limitations in local resources.

(3) The next challenge in putting SWSCs into practice is how to get other service areas' acceptance and peoples' awareness about their functions and services. LPP13 noted that in her province, it was very hard for her centre to connect or cooperate with other services, such as those of local justice, health care, and education. This was because it was a new service model and not officially introduced to other fields.

The director pointed out that:

Because our SWSC is so new in relation to other areas, such as the courts and other legal agencies, we cannot work with them and get their support for vulnerable children. (LPP13)

This raises the issue of how to persuade the other fields that the SWSC is a legitimate agency supporting vulnerable children and people. IOs and LPs should take into consideration inter-disciplinary awareness raising and promote local networking with related fields.

Community awareness was another matter of concern. IOP4 noted that since people have never seen and or even imagined the idea of an SWSC, they did not know what it did, what its tasks and functions were or how it operated, and what kind of services it provided. More importantly, they did not know how this model could bring benefits to local people. This view was shared by LPP7:

People don't recognise SWSCs' services and therefore the demand for them is low. So the least we can do is let them know our address and the services we provide for children when they need help. (LPP7)

This interviewee thought it was necessary encourage people to use SWSC services, and particularly to create a 'demand' for social work services. These comments illustrate that it is an urgent task for the social work profession to prove the necessity of its services and to promote the benefits it can bring to vulnerable children and other vulnerable people. This is also a concern voiced by LPP17. He commented on what both the IOs and LPs should do to increase this model's visibility and acceptance by examining how it could bring benefits to vulnerable people and communities.

To solve these problems, there are few initiatives that have been applied. A director of SWSC in a northern province suggested:

We have to make use of the pilot models or the other policies. It is fortunate that I am supported. We have to 'stick to the rails'. But our rail is more flexible. (LPP7)

Based on the lessons drawn from those models LPP7 suggested, IOs and LPs could adjust their services to fit with local needs. This approach seems to be useful for model development after a period of piloting, because the service model can be adjusted and then expanded to other locations. This LP indicated that he had to adjust the model to

fit with the local context and local policies and that the SWSC's advocacy was the key to its success.

Another LP participant also recommended gaining public recognition for the new professional services. She said:

At the same time as the establishment of SWSCs, we have to work on people's awareness and advertise the centre's services. If we don't raise people's awareness of the centre, the centre cannot be effective. (LPP10)

The issue raised by this comment is how to 'sell' SWSCs' services to the public. This needs to be considered when building the SWSC's developmental strategies. Therefore, introducing a number of information sharing channels to make people aware of their services is one way to promote SWSCs. It is very important that communities have a good understanding of social work services and are willing to access them.

In summary, this section has provided an analysis of the research participants' views on the newly developed model—the SWSCs. This model is noted as one key component of Project 32. The intention is to bring a wide range of professional services to communities, including developing communities, working with individuals and families, and working with groups. In particular, it plays the role of a coordinator in connecting local available resources and building a supporting network for vulnerable people and children. From its birth, it has faced a number of challenges: clearly developing its roles and functions, getting centrally orientated government policies, overcoming the limited public awareness of its services, and dealing with infrastructure constraints in preparation of its operations. However, the centres have initiated solutions to address those difficulties, such as introducing a new centre to its community, raising people's awareness of its services, and building programs based on the local context and needs. These are initial efforts in making this professional model locally appropriate. However, more work is required to identify its professional role and develop services, which can reach out to vulnerable children and communities at the local level.

This is the first professional service model, the second model is discussed in the following section.

5.3.2 Community-based Child Care and Protection System (CBCCPS)

5.3.2.1 An Overview

The CBCCPS model was developed in late 2008 and the beginning of 2009 through a close collaboration between MOLISA, UNICEF, and SC. Later, Plan, World Vision, and the Child Fund became involved in order to help children and their families at the community level. The main purpose of this service is to build a network of care and protection for children in their communities, which is seen as one of the weaknesses of the child care and protection systems after the abolition of the CPFC.

In this model, all project activities are community-based and are carried out by a local multiple disciplinary network of community staff and collaborators. One of the advantages of this model is that it caters for all children in the community, and is not limited to any particular group. Nevertheless, attention is given to children in special circumstances, such as orphaned children, children with HIV/AIDS, children affected by chemical poisons, children with severe disabilities, and street children. The two main aims of this model were stated by IOP3; they were:

(1) to develop a policy to support the implementation of this model in Vietnam, and (2) to provide model demonstrations to show that it can be achieved in Vietnam and to help other provinces or areas learn from each other in implementing community-based care. (IOP3)

Basically, this model helps to set up a multi-disciplinary team involved in prevention, treatment and reintegration at a community level. After five years, 22 pilot models have been set up in 22 provinces and cities.

At the initial stage, the main project activities consisted of building a community network of project managers and volunteers. This network was in charge of developing interventions to handle child abuse cases and protect those children from being discovered to the termination of their care plan.

CBCCPSs were appreciated by LPs for their professional approach. An LP acknowledged that this model was “professional and immediately supports children in the community. It is very good for clients” (LPP17). Notably, the introduction of a

community-based approach is contributing to deinstitutionalising children from residential care in protection centres to community care. IOP21 noted:

I have seen community-based orientation as a better trend of providing services for children and families. Thanks to the IOs for their initiative in launching a professional model with a new and a systematic approach. (IOP21)

These ideas from the head of a child protection unit in a large IO confirmed that their approach in providing services for vulnerable children was appropriate.

In this model, the idea of placing a social worker in the community network was emphasised. As IOP12 described:

In the model [CBCCPS] a social worker plays the roles of the nucleus and coordinator of the system. So social workers will connect the child protection network. (IOP12)

This comment spells out the important roles of community workers. By using the current community workforce, IO projects do not add one more working position, which would burden the government budget and administration structure. Instead, such use helps make the project feasible and sustainable. This is one particular model for mobilising local resources in IO projects. However, this raises the question of whether this mobilisation will cause practical difficulties as this particular community staff member already is in charge of many other tasks.

5.3.2.2 Organisational Structure

The CBCCPS's organisational structure was similar amongst the sites studied. There is a steering committee at both district and community levels. The committee at the communal level typically comprises the Chairman, who is the community vice chairperson in charge of social affairs and cultural activities, and representatives from different departments and sectors, such as LISA, preschools, primary schools, secondary schools, health clinics, the police, the judiciary, and Women's Association. According to IOP15, there are "a lot of community stakeholders involved in the commune child protection committee" (IOP15). However, these members work part-time. They only meet when there is an issue or a problem, as LPP14 stated:

Those [members of the steering committee] who work for the project are holding other tasks concurrently. We do not have full-time staff who only work for the project. (LPP14)

Taking a district in Dien Bien province as an illustration, the board of the steering committee consisted of three child protection staff and six other members from many related sectors, such as education, healthcare, the Women's Association, the Youth's Union and the Farmers' Association. They are all trained by UNICEF and tasked with calling for cooperation and connecting related sectors to support children. They are also responsible for clients' referrals to relevant services. A program coordinator of CBCCPS in Dien Bien said:

If clients are involved in a legal problem or seek rehabilitation for children with severe disabilities, we have to connect to healthcare services and ask them to provide medical treatment. (LPP17)

Under the Child Protection Committee, there are community collaborator networks of adult and child volunteers. To recruit adults and children for the community collaborator networks, the IOs and steering committees follow a recruitment procedure. Some IOs have a very good strategy of taking advantage of the old collaborators who used to work for the CPFC field before that organisation was dissolved. Child volunteers are selected from primary school, provided with training and built into a core group. And from this core group, children are encouraged to participate in the community children's care and protection collaborator network.

5.3.2.3 Main Activities

The main activities of this project focus on providing three services. The first is preventive services for community children and families. An IO interviewee described that this was a top priority as they wanted to deal with issues when they first arose and, for her, "prevention is carried out through good works in community education, media education, and project site management" (IOP12). The second is services for intervention, in which services to help abused children are provided. And the third is rehabilitative services, which require high skills in psychology, counselling, psychotherapy, and case management.

One of the important components of this project is the participation of children in the community volunteer team providing communication sessions for the community. The children in group discussion 3 reported that they had conducted five public information sharing sessions for their peer groups, other children, and their parents. They were given full responsibility from designing through to implementing this activity. The leader of this team noted:

We were engaged in a media session. And in order to organise this communication session, we had to make a plan and organise group meetings for preparation. We had to work out how our group would hold the session and how much knowledge should be shared with other community children and their families. (GD3)

To prepare children to fulfil their tasks, they were equipped with knowledge and skills in children's care, protection, and communication. After that, they organised community knowledge sharing sessions. During the group discussion, they enthusiastically talked to the researcher about the four groups of child rights and how to convert those rights into practice, particularly in enabling parents and the community to understand these rights and use them with their children.

One of the benefits of this program voiced by a participant IO, was how this organisation incorporated the successes of previous projects into new ones. For example, one interviewee said that her organisation was very creative in combining this model with a successful old project they had previously implemented.

We also inserted the component on promoting positive discipline into this community-based model. We think it benefits children because a big part of this program is on preventing the physical punishment of children. (IOP14)

Thus, CBCCPS inherited the previous program component of child positive discipline. Participants from this organisation reported that when this content was introduced to schools for teachers and then children's parents. They found it helpful in preventing child abuse. Not only does this set a good example of creativity in the amalgamation of the previous successful model into the new one, it also contributes the effectiveness of the current model.

5.3.2.4 Challenges

According to the participants, the CBCCPS experienced two major difficulties. The first challenge concerned the lack of human resources. As previously mentioned in Section 4.2.3, the lack of a professional workforce became a problem in developing services. This was emphasised by the research participants who said that such a lack was more serious at the community level. Most of the community collaborators were not well equipped with knowledge and skills. In addition, since most of the members in the community network were working part-time, in the experience of a local partner, this caused “many difficulties” (LPP14). She found it was more challenging because these members were involved in so many other tasks that they could not concentrate on the project activities.

The second challenge is in regard to the new local network which has not yet developed a teamwork approach. LPP14 continued to explain:

If there is an incident it may relate to crime; it is passed on to the police, and then the police push it back to this or that association. Thus, if there is no defined problem solving procedure, it is, of course, normal that people want to push the responsibility to others. There is no shared responsibility. (LPP14)

Many other services participate at the community level, but when a case, such as the one discussed above occurs, it appears that cooperation in the network is minimal. The above example is what can occur when other services try to ‘pass the ball’. And then the responsibility is pushed back and forth between agencies. So teamwork in the network has not yet become a ‘working style’.

This section has discussed the CBCCPS that intends to prevent child abuse at the grass roots level. It stresses the operation of preventive activities, such as public information sharing, and setting up a community collaborator network which includes adult and child volunteers, to develop early prevention. Importantly, this model helps to promote the cooperation of different community stakeholders in addressing children’s issues, to date a system weakness in Vietnam. Although there has been some progress in the prevention of child abuse at a community level, those implementing this model are still exploring how to make use of community systems to address the comprehensive needs of children and families.

5.3.3 Alternative Care

5.3.3.1 An Overview

Alternative care is another model discussed by the research participants. Locally, alternative care is a form of care in families or communities that provide different options for long-term, mid-term or short-term care for children who cannot live with their biological parents. Alternative care includes three main care models: foster care/kinship care, care in community homes, and adoption.

Some of these alternative care models have existed in Vietnam for a long time. However, these have not been acknowledged as professional services but with support from IOs, alternative care is being recognised as a professional way of helping children in difficult circumstances. This model may become the most common service for disadvantaged children in the future. It has opened the door for more forms of care in the best interests of the child and to further deinstitutionalisation. The next section focuses on presenting one model of alternative care—foster care provided by a participant INGO.

It is noted that IOs, especially INGOs are pioneers in finding alternative care for vulnerable children. IOP6 noted:

We are aware that the roles and tasks of the centre are not only providing care for children, but also paying attention to finding families for children. And we create the belief that the family is always the best environment for children. We also designed another type of alternative care—foster care. (IOP6)

Since the beginning of their cooperation with the Centre for Malnourished and Orphaned Children, this IO organisation has set up the objective of raising children in a family environment, not in an institution. When they introduced the foster care model, they wanted to integrate it with residency planning, which was contrary to the practice of the centre as they had been developing long-term care plans for children at the centre.

Foster care is relevant for a certain time period. It is temporary care, which can be applied in a crisis when a family cannot not take care of their children due to difficult circumstances. Notably, through foster care, disadvantaged children can be provided

with an opportunity to experience a 'home' environment before being reunited with or going to a new family. IOP18 explained:

Fostered children can play with brothers and sisters who will help them to integrate. This is not what they can have in the centre where they don't have many contacts. The foster mother is very strict in the role of the real mum. I see that the children who are sent out are more active. (IOP18)

What she has directly witnessed from home visits to foster families was the progress of the children. For her, foster homes brought children an important feeling of being in a family with parents and siblings, which was hard to get from living in an institution. This transition environment prepared children for integration into the outside world.

In the foster care model, foster parents have an important role in the process of professional service development for children, thus, IOs paid attention to providing them with knowledge and skills. Two IO interviewees, who were involved in parenting education and sharing knowledge and skills about raising children, stressed the value of this activity. One said: "that kind of information sharing is very important" (IOP19). A different IO participant noted:

We have conducted parenting skills training programs for parents whose children are participating in the program sponsored by [this organisation]. So for the next training session we will share the information about mass diseases among children, the knowledge of how to take care of their children—the simplest and very basic knowledge. (IOP17)

Foster parents in this program were regularly equipped with very basic skills related to children's care.

The message from IOP17 shows the necessity of taking a professional approach in which all stakeholders are empowered to ensure that children are well cared for.

Apart from providing training, the organisation keeps in regular contact with foster families to provide support when it is needed. For example, IOP19 spoke about the relationship between social work, spirituality, and religion. As Gotterer (2001) discovered from her research "spirituality and religion can be a source of strength to clients" (p. 192). IOP19 has helped the foster family of a child with cerebral palsy. When the child was sick the foster family did not know what to do, as they thought it

was related to a spiritual issue. They consequently asked for help from a religious person.

We had to send someone to help with the spiritual thing and then the boy was so much better. In addition to support for the child, when there is a difficulty we are ready to help. (IOP19)

This adds weight to the idea of respecting local customs and values in international cooperation programs and projects, which will be further discussed in Chapters 8 and 9.

One of the beneficial experiences provided by an IO is their comprehensive procedure of helping children after foster care. IOP6 stated:

For children who can be reunited with their families, we have follow-up family preservation support. DOLISA and our staff will periodically visit the child in the family to see how the children are integrating into their families. (IOP6)

This follow-up plan for children reflects a professional approach in making sure the child is developing under the best conditions. If the child can be returned to his or her original family, IOs can provide a support for the family via their family preservation fund. This is a comprehensive process for helping clients and is a good example of how to make the best use of support programs. This IO also looks for other solutions to meet the best interest of vulnerable children.

Our first priority is to preserve the family, but if this is not possible, we try to find local families willing to adopt—Vietnamese families for domestic adoption. And inter-country adoption is the last solution. (IOP6)

5.3.3.2 Challenges

The alternative care is recognised as a useful solution for children's care and protection in the process of deinstitutionalisation, but in practice they still have to overcome obstacles. The research participants mentioned two key difficulties: conflicts with the old institutional care, and how to link this model with other supportive systems.

In relation to the first concern IOP6 explained:

There are many very difficult things. But what we are worried about most is the response of some local staff. They think that the alternative care will deny the existence of SPCs. However, that is not the story; this care model actually

diversifies the function of the centre. But their minds are firmly closed to this. Are they ready to change themselves? Not yet. (IOP6)

What IOP6 noted is the difficulty in maintaining alternative care development at the same time as maintaining a connection to the old care models, such as SPCs. This represents the challenge of changing people's perceptions. These comments confirm the difficulty that most of new models face at their initial stage and suggest that both IOs and LPs need to pay attention to publicising information about the new models. It is also important to balance the work between the new and old models and to take advantage of the successes of the old.

The second obstacle discussed by the IO interviewees was the challenge of alternative care fitting into the local service system in which IOs sometimes found it difficult to continue alternative care. In some cases, alternative care was only provided for a certain time and finding long-term care was difficult. For example, in foster care children were placed in foster families for a few months or for one to two years. After that, children needed to be transferred to long-term care, such as returning to her/his original family, to their adopted family, to kinship care or to home care. However, in reality, children had to return to institutional care because there was no long-term care available to them. How to make a relevant referral between alternative care services becomes a burning issue needing to be addressed.

In addition, like other new models of care, there was a concern among IOs and LPs about how to introduce this model. For example, IOP3 said:

We have family-based alternative care which is a development of foster care. This is in a very preliminary stage and we have no experience to draw from. Because the government currently isn't implementing any form of foster care models or any foster care development. (IOP3)

In short, the emergence of the alternative care model has challenged the way in which people view traditional services for disadvantaged children. The most popular type of alternative care discussed by the research participants is foster care. This type of care, as well as other forms of care, such as kinship care, social houses (group home care at community) and adoption has lessened the need for institutional care for children in difficult circumstances. The experiences of a participant IO in providing foster care at the Centre for Malnourished and Orphaned Children sets a good

example for other organisations in providing foster care services for the vulnerable. However, according to research participants, despite some progress, the mind-set of local staff regarding new and old services and the referral service system for long-term care needs to be improved.

5.3.4 Vocational Training

Vocational training with life skills education for disadvantaged children and young people is gaining attention and support. Two of the participant IOs in this study provide this service. The following section presents and analyses two vocational training programs from two different IOs.

5.3.4.1 50% Vocational Training and 50% Life Skills Education at IO (D)

An Overview

IO (D) is a social entrepreneurship working with Vietnamese street children and disadvantaged children and youth via its vocational and life skills training program. Its vocational training model reflects a professional approach to assisting children to gain employment skills and to participate in the community. An aspect differentiating this IO from many other social entrepreneurship is its emphasis on providing professional services for children from intake to post graduation. This IO vocational program provides 50% vocational and 50% life skill training. One head of department at this organisation highlighted the importance of this approach. He said the students “enjoy half vocational training and half personal education, and 50% for sharing their emotions” (IOP7).

The life skills training plays a crucial role in the clients’ development. The life skills training is provided over 1.5 years. For the first year it is taught in parallel with vocational training and for the last six months students have one session a week. This training covers communication skills, reproductive health, the twelve life values, as well as other relevant skills, such as cooking, shopping, financial management skills, sewing or domestic electronic equipment fixing, and so on. This training program was developed based on individual needs as shared by IOP9 and IOP11.

We do not set up a fixed standard life skills training manual in [this organisation]. It depends on the clients. We developed our manual together with children. (IOP9)

We meet regularly to identify each student's problems, such as the particular problem in their lives and at their home as well as the problems that they face when they are working and their questions about spiritual issues. These are then added to the materials. (IOP11)

This officer again repeated the importance of taking into consideration the real context in which children found themselves.

This IO also employs follow-up care for graduates. Two staff mentioned that their organisation supports children from the time they came to their program until they graduated and found a stable job. They wanted to make sure that their graduates became more mature and confident.

Even when they have a job, they still receive our support; support in applying for a job, and emotional support if they are in difficulties. (IOP7)

The most interesting part of life skills training is that children are not just trained in theory and practice in the classroom. They are provided with practical experiences in their homes. Office staff and foster mothers work in very close cooperation to observe their children practising these values and life skills, such as the value of respect.

For disadvantaged youth and children, life skills training was seen as very important. When the researcher asked one head of a department, who used to be a student at this IO, about her views on the life skills training she received, she said that she appreciated this program very much. She stated that her mother had died when she was quite young and other family members were busy so nobody taught her the basics of reproductive health or other life skills. Thus before joining this program she had no idea of these things. Current students shared the same feelings.

I have the feeling that life skills are indispensable in my life, as we always need them. If we learn we always get excited because it is always relevant to our lives. (GD2)

The group discussion was conducted just after the children finished their presentations about organic food and food sanitation. The researcher could see their satisfaction with the results of their presentations because they were prepared and able to practise the skills, which they have learned from the life skills training.

Assessing the this model, both the staff and children have a positive view on the work that their organisation has been doing, especially the way that they have helped to provide an environment for the full-development of children's potential. A foster mother who has been working at this organisation for more than three years commented that this IO has provided a 'home' for children who were in difficult situations. She noted:

A child is abandoned but when he/she comes here, he/she has mother, brothers and sisters; they have emotional bonds that are different. They know how the relationship between family members should be, how to keep your place clean. They can learn how to cook a meal, how to go shopping, how to enjoy being happy, and how to integrate with friends. (IOP20)

IOP9 spoke about what has made this organisation model unique: their care for children as real members of this IO family.

If you go to other schools, they only teach you skills, but they do not care why you are crying, why you are always laughing or why you are just sitting alone. Here, all of the staff are the teachers as well as older brothers and sisters. (IOP9)

Living in a collective environment like this IO is a useful opportunity for vulnerable children to understand themselves and share other children's difficulties.

Children are gathered to integrate in a collective environment. He/she does not have to think, 'oh, I am very disadvantaged. So I don't need to care about others'. (IOP10)

This helps vulnerable children to value what they have and see that they are not alone, that there are other children who are as vulnerable and disadvantaged as they are.

All the children in group discussions 1 and 2 thought of this IO as 'home' or 'second home' for disadvantaged children and youth like them. One girl said that the environment in this organisation was like living under the 'same roof' with brothers and sisters for everyone because "living in here, I feel like I am being cared for and help by all the family members" (GD1). They all respected each other in a way little perceived before joining the program. A boy from this group said that since he has joined this program, this new 'family' has helped him to feel happier and helped him "perfect myself more" (GD1).

Two different boys from group discussions 1 and 2 who had lived in a SPC before tried to compare the time they had at this IO with their old places.

Although I know what it is to live, to be fed, to stay in a house, the people at that [old] centre treated each other too harshly and were not as happy as here. If the new environment was like the old one, it would be a nightmare. (GD1)

The second boy preferred living in this organisation because he has learned life skills, which helped him to communicate better with others.

I like the [this organisation] environment better. At the old centre, it was just general education; we did not have a chance to learn life skills. (GD2)

When the researcher asked the disadvantaged children and young people which model they would select if one was like this IO and the other provided only vocational training, most of them chose this IO. One described this IO as “a humanitarian vocational training centre” (GD2) that provided him with a career for the future. Importantly, he was proud that he could help the organisation earn money from its restaurant; and profits that benefitted the children in its care.

Challenges

Although many comments from staff and children were positive about this IO vocational and life skills training model, there are some concerns, which the researcher observed and which were raised by the staff and children. These were primarily about providing professional counselling services for children. Nevertheless, all of the research participants provided a common response: everyone in their organisation could be a counsellor.

At [this organisation] each staff member is a counsellor. If children feel they are comfortable with any staff, they can share their problems. (IOP8)

The foster mother had the same idea. She said, “there are many other people who can provide help, such as the teachers” (IOP20).

Children from group discussion echoed her ideas.

All we need is psychological help. It is interesting here that all staff can share our difficulties, our concerns. There is not only one unit to do that, but also our foster mom, staff from welfare departments, and trainers from the training department who had been in [this organisation]. (GD2)

Nonetheless, the question is whether they can provide professional counselling for those children or only emotional support in simple situations. At the time of data collection, there was no regular staff member with social work training or special training in counselling. The counselling service was carried out by all the staff and many of them used their own experiences to support the children. Their service only provided emotional support, which could not be called counselling. Two boys from group discussion 1 raised the same issue. The first boy said:

I think if I can share my problems with someone it would be better but I still haven't found a person that I can talk to yet. I just try to forget about my problems. (GD1)

The second boy said he did not trust anyone so he often kept his problems to himself and ignored them. He shared: "I think it's my problem and I have to take care of it myself"(GD1).

In summary, IO (D)'s vocational and life skills training is a unique social service model in Vietnam for disadvantaged children. Its philosophy of 'building a person' through vocational training has created changes in the lives of the disadvantaged children they cater for. Children, under this model, are taken care of in a family environment, which has helped them to develop their potential and compensate for the losses they have experienced. Nonetheless, there are difficulties in providing professional services, such as counselling, for these children. These need to be taken into account of how to develop a model that meets the psychological needs of disadvantaged children appropriately and effectively.

5.3.4.2 Vocational Training at IO (C)

IO (C) introduced another model of vocational training for disadvantaged children. This has been adapted from an Indian program called Livelihood Advancement Business School (LABS). This program also includes vocational training and life skills training. However, it differs from the IO (D)'s service model. First, it focuses more on vocational training than life skills training. Second, it provides training without residency and the duration of the training is shorter.

This model was imported to Hanoi in 2004. Then, it was contextualised to meet the demands of Vietnamese disadvantaged children and youth as well as the demand from the labour market. LABS pays special attention to choosing vocations where there are skill shortages. The vocational training is conducted over four months, including one month of employment placement. Life skills training is taught in the first three months while students are studying a vocation and is divided into two periods: one first week of intensive learning and the second period throughout the last three months in combination with vocational training.

It is important that life skills are not viewed as ‘this is the life skills part of the course and this is the skills part of the course’. Life skills should run all the way through because building them is a process, and not just one day of confidence building, one day of team building, etc. (IOP16)

As with IO (D), this IO officer confirmed the importance of life skills training for his students. He stated that he constantly asked himself about the life skills program and found that it was the most important component. In life skills training, within a limited time, students learn basic skills, such as reproductive health, HIV prevention, and work readiness skills as well as personal grooming and hygiene. According to an international staff member in charge of the vocational program, the aim of this program is to help their students “to build self-worth and belonging and really break down some the physical barriers between them and their classmates” (IOP16) so that they can be more comfortable in class and build relationship.

The person in charge of vocational training said that they have a six-month follow-up plan for their graduates. They kept in touch with them and their employers to make sure that they were settling in well. And if there was any issue, they would help address it. From his experience, as many of the youth were very new to the work place it was hard for them to get used to the system so alumni supported the new students.

So that settling happens through the staff of the project but also through the alumni of the project. The students who have been through program act also as active peers to new students coming to the program to help them settle in. (IOP16)

He felt their life skills training worked well and that after the three months, everyone in the class was willing to help each other and a strong bond was built among them. He reflected that he had seen a change in the young people.

So just seeing the difference in how people interact with each other after three months and how they interact with people outside of the classroom is the biggest difference. For me, life skills are the critical thing. (IOP16)

Although life skills training is confirmed as an important part in this short-term training, perhaps due to the very short training time, there is a question about whether this creates a long-term change for disadvantaged youth. This man felt that the time allocated for life skills was too short.

Yes, it is too short, but we are not a program that aims to change somebody's psychology. Do we address the underlying problem associated with years of being abused? No. (IOP16)

His question is also relevant to programs that do not have the resources to maintain continuous support for disadvantaged children, especially in addressing psychological problems.

LABS has now been transferred to a local NGO. This NGO will continue this vocational training program with both financial and technical support from this IO. This transfer is appropriate in order to localise the program.

The vocational training program initiated by IO (C) is another service model for disadvantaged children and youth in Vietnam. This is one of many other services provided and supported by this organisation. Although this program is imported, it has been adjusted to fit with the local needs. It focuses on the vocational aspect with life skills training as a supplement component to help vulnerable children and youth integrate into a studying and working environment and only basic life skills are provided.

In short, the combination of vocational training and life skills education appears to have brought a positive change in the service system for disadvantaged children and youth. Children joining the program can develop vocational and social skills. Feedback from children and IO staff in vocational guidance suggests that disadvantaged children and youth gain more if the program balances both vocational and life skills training.

This suggests that the IOs and LPs, when designing vocational training programs for vulnerable children and youth, should support them in developing life skills. In addition, it is very important for IOs and LPs to think about how to adjust overseas models, like the Vietnam's LABS, to dovetail with local needs and context. This will be discussed further in Chapters 8 and 9.

5.3.5 Outreach Program

Outreach programs are newly developed services in communities. Most of the outreach programs are designed to serve poor communities. It is hoped that this will increase the number of children who can access services and contribute to prevention and early intervention. An outreach program introduced by the participant IOs includes family preservation, a day care service, single mother support, and a CHL. As a direct service provider, IO (E) has been operating just such a comprehensive outreach program for children and families in need. The ultimate goal of this organisation is to promote prevention—a function that is still not receiving enough attention.

5.3.5.1 Family Preservation

The family preservation program that has been introduced aims at preventing and preserving families in difficult situations with children under 15 years old and children who are at risk of homelessness. In this program, the families in crisis receive funds to help them generate income to keep the children in the family and prevent them from being neglected, abandoned or sent to institutional care. Every year, the program can support from 25 to 30 children and families and it has now expanded to three locations in the rural area of Hanoi. This program has a very close relationship with the DOLISA.

Family selection is initiated by local officials and representatives from the Women's Association who provide a list of families in need. Field assessments of families in difficult situations are conducted and only families experiencing severe and unexpected events are given priority. IOP18 described the case of a father of two girls (a four year old and a one year old) who died because of an accident at a construction

site. The mother was a poor farmer and they received little support from their families. They were selected as needing this service to keep the family together.

There are many cases like this where the family has experienced a sudden crisis, like a parent dying, a family member having an accident, or the head of the household suddenly no longer having the capacity to work or having lost their job. IOP17 commented that:

There are two forms of assistance. The first is emergency assistance. The second is to give the family a capital grant. They can invest the funds and get the interest for raising their children. (IOP17)

These two programs assist families to overcome their immediate difficulties and provide a stable income.

They must affirm that when they have capital for investment, the interest will be used for improving their children's diet or for the children to go to school. It is not for buying furniture. (IOP18)

In order to receive the support the selected families must agree that all of the investment must be spent on care for the children to ensure that the children benefit directly.

This seed funding is used by the families in a various ways, based on their capacity and condition.

The fund helps them with raising livestock, opening a small shop or, combined with the family savings buying a motorbike so that they can earn income from "xe ôm"—driving people by motorbike, as long as they can ensure a better life for their children. (IOP19)

From the field visit with the IO officers, the researcher witnessed what families were enabled to do. Children were taken care of and local organisations, as well as relatives felt a responsibility towards these families.

The challenge this service is facing is providing direct services and supervision because they are not based in the communities. During the field trip, the researcher observed there was a large need for counselling, but this need has not yet been addressed in the program, nor is it available in other services in the community.

5.3.5.2 Day Care

Many IOs are interested in operating a day care model for vulnerable children as they can see the high demand for this service in many communities. IOs have been involved at both the advocacy and implementing levels. At the advocacy level, IO (A) promotes this service and it is considered as a family strengthening program.

The idea is to try to support families so that they are able to keep their children with them at home and it's also about being able to provide a respite for them. (IOP3)

IOP3 claimed that her work is trying to develop day care centres for children with disabilities because these children are at high risk of improper care at home.

This service is provided in some communities, with support from local partners. The day care program was implemented in early 2011 after an assessment survey conducted in a rural and mountainous area of Hanoi found that there were many children in poor families who had a very meagre diet. They also did not attend kindergarten because their parents claimed they did not have enough money for the tuition fee. The officers said that many of them had never drunk fresh milk. The head of IO (E) said that the officers burst into tears when they saw children holding a bottle of fresh milk for the first time, unaware of how to drink it. The program also contributes to tuition fees for children in poor communities as well as strengthening parenting knowledge and skills.

Though it is a day care program, it provides multiple services including nutrition, financial support, and scholarships. (IOP6)

IOP19 claimed that this service "satisfies the objective of providing support for a bigger number of children." (IOP19)

Since the day care program started, it is claimed that the number of children going to school has increased.

When we have day care, we provide financial support for tuition fees, free milk, or we provide supplementary nutritious lunches at school so their school attendance is much better. In the mountainous area sometimes, because their houses are so far away, they do not send their children to school. Now the children come to school to have milk and play with toys. (IOP18)

The day-care program is new and for IOP19 it is a challenge to their staff because they have not run a program like this before. So they have to continue taking assessments and adjusting the program in order to fit with local needs.

First we must understand what this program will do and what we want. Then I continue to work on surveys. After gathering information, and knowing the needs, the next thing is, based on the needs; we build activities for this program. (IOP19)

Currently, with a high number of disadvantaged children living in communities and families, there is a need to develop this sort of service further.

5.3.5.3 Single Mother Support

The main purpose of the single mother support program is to help mothers who have unplanned babies, to prevent these babies from being abandoned. The program focus is on providing counselling and promoting parenting education for these mothers before and after their delivery as well as providing small financial support during their pregnancy and labour. This project has been conducted in the provinces where there are many foreign invested factories that employ a very large labour force, particularly girls and women. In this sense, it can be said that this social work service is involved in addressing the effects of globalisation in the local context.

The mother and the child will stay on the program for a certain period of time to make sure that they receive the necessary support when they are in difficulties and that the child is safe. After many mothers receive the single mother service, they also receive financial support, such as an amount of capital for their labour after having their baby so that the baby will be looked after under the best conditions possible. (IOP6)

This program closely collaborates with DOLISA. The local leader of this Department said that he was very interested in their cooperation in this field and he appreciated the respect from and cooperation with the IO.

In general [the program] is very specific and respects DOLISA. We select the clients and the two sides agree on the funding norms. Every three months they visit families and talk to the children. (LPP3)

The single mother support is a good example of addressing an emerging issue at the local community level. Because of IO's close collaboration with LPs, both these LPs and

single mothers have welcomed this program. This also contributes to prevention of vulnerable children being harmed.

5.3.5.4 Child Help Line (CHL)

The CHL was founded in 2004 with the support from IO (C). This 24-hour hot line provides a direct counselling service for children and families. This project has completed its first five-year phase and is now turning to the second phase. The manager of this project said that, in the first phase, the IO supported everything including providing facilities, hiring staff and paying for phone charges. But in the second phase they will gradually transfer these to the local partner and will just provide technical support and some equipment and help to conduct research, surveys and assessments. Currently, it is one of the public social services for vulnerable children and communities managed by a Ministry.

A leader of this Ministry department stated that this hot line played an important role in threading together all the services in both the vertical and horizontal systems. There has been a lot of involvement from many fields in prevention and intervention, such as interventions from medical, legal, and judiciary staff. It is “a whole system” (LPP8). It helps to address the problem of a fragmented child protection service. When this hotline was in the design process, local partners were sent to Thailand and India for a study tour to observe the model. When the CHL came to Vietnam it was adjusted for local conditions and with lessons learned from other countries, such as Australia and Sweden, it has been further modified to fit with the local system and resources.

An IO participant confirmed that the CHL in Vietnam is different from other CHL and is “not a twin child-help line with any other country” (LPP8). He revealed that his international counterpart first wanted the Vietnamese to adopt the model of the CHL in India, but that model reflected a non-governmental style, as it works directly with children. However, with much effort and discussion between the local partners and the IO, they created a Vietnamese model, which has its own characteristics: It is under the management of a government body; its services are open to both children and families; and it specialises in child protection. It, therefore, differs considerably from the Indian model, which is managed by an NGO and is mainly for street children. And

in India they have an open home system in which street children can live for a certain time before they are referred to other services. The program could not run this way in Vietnam due to the systems already in place.

As the first hotline introduced to Vietnam, the CHL has faced some obstacles from the design to operating stages. In the beginning the local partners found this model to be very challenging.

At that time in Vietnam, people did not have the habit of picking up the phone to talk to a person very far away about their problems, especially children. So if we set up an apparatus like that, and all day you sat there just to answer only two phone calls you would have to ask: is this effective or not? (LPP8)

It is understandable that these difficulties have kept the designers of this program alert to how to make this accessible to children, families, and communities. Additionally, it must meet the government's requirement to prove that this model is feasible and can prevent family problems and support children. The program did this by conducting needs assessments. The question of cost and benefits was also raised, as this project is expensive in human and organisational terms. The LPs also encountered difficulty between domestic and foreign ideas of the model's effectiveness.

I had to struggle with the domestic sector about the foreign approach and had to fight with the foreign partners so that they did not impose their approach on Vietnam. I had to make it locally appropriate. (LPP8)

There is still a challenge in publicising its services. Although this model has been operating for more than half a decade, and great efforts have been made towards raising people's awareness and use of its services, "many still do not know about it" (LPP9).

It can be concluded that the outreach program has contributed to services for vulnerable children and families. It helps to improve prevention, which, as noted above, is considered lacking in the provision of professional services for vulnerable people in Vietnam. Outreach programs have been introduced in various forms, which include direct services to vulnerable children, families, and the community. However, these models are still facing challenges in making them fit to the local systems.

5.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the process of professionalising services for Vietnam's disadvantaged children. First it addressed the question of how social work knowledge and principles were being mainstreamed in the development of services. Key social work principles were employed in the development of services. They were: 'starting where clients are', 'acceptance' of clients' perspectives, being 'client-centred', and 'strengths-' and rights-based. This reflects the interests and attention given by IOs and LPs to social work professionalisation and provides some assurance of the quality of services. Second, the introduction of new services models, such as SWSCs, CBCCPS, alternative care, vocational training in combination with life skill training, and outreach programs were said to have brought benefits to disadvantaged children and their families. Thus, the operation of new models has helped reorient and reconstruct the current service system in Vietnam toward a family and community-base. Particularly, it confirms the importance of the social work profession in improving the outlook for vulnerable children, families, and communities. There are, however, many challenges ahead before Vietnam arrives at an 'indigenous' and 'authentic' operation of professional services. Challenges such as: addressing the lack of guiding policies, removing the limitations in organisational structures and local human resources, and improving people's awareness of social work and its services remain. The important question is how to further efforts to promote and develop suitable services models for vulnerable children.

The next chapter discusses the key issues in building these appropriate services.

CHAPTER 6

ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the development of social work services for disadvantaged children. The purpose of this chapter is to take further the investigation of the issues and challenges being faced during this service developmental process. Therefore, it concentrates on the key factors identified by both IO and LP participants that need to be considered in the local context. The chapter begins with a discussion of the needs assessment process when building IO programs, as this challenges the top-down approach in local thinking. Following this, the chapter presents various types of practical difficulties that IOs have overcome. This chapter concludes with the issue of sustainability that is seen as important by both IO and LP agencies.

6.2 Needs Assessment

An appropriate needs assessment was considered the most important element by participants in developing quality services. For example, an IO officer who worked in the role of a social worker expanded on this. He stressed the importance of discovering “what are the needs of the people, and based on the local people’s needs, we build the program” (IOP19). Thus, IO and LP staff prioritised the fashioning of appropriate needs assessments in different localities. Emphasis is placed on the way in which service program development processes must start from the thorough identification of local features and clients’ needs. In addition, various methods of conducting a program needs assessment are explored by analysing IO and LP staff experiences.

6.2.1 Assessing Local Features

Needs assessments firstly require the program and model designers to assess local characteristics. All the participants drew attention to assessing the situation in the country before setting up any cooperation, by which they meant the context of the prospective project localities. As LPP2 said:

We have to assess the needs accurately to clarify the needs of each locality. We meet with beneficiaries face to face and directly exchanging ideas. We also openly hold discussions with the local government at all levels. (LPP2)

In addition, both IO and LP interviewees commented on the necessity of reviewing local features, such as social structures, economic situations, local customs and habits of child care, and political issues at different administration levels. An IO officer noted:

Usually, it begins by assessing the situation and reviewing the current system—the strengths and weaknesses including the legal and policy systems. (IOP4)

This comment lists several issues that need to be explored, mostly at the central government and administrative levels. This evaluation helps to analyse the current local system and finds strengths to support the service development, as well as the niches which the service program may fill.

Sharing the same perspective, a local head of a ministry division stressed the significance of knowing “the real service system in Vietnam” (LPP9). By saying this, he suggested that IOs should study how the service system was delivered and operated so that this knowledge can be integrated into their projects and programs. For many IOs and international experts, having a more detailed sense of the local system is the most challenging part of their work. As discussed in Chapters 1 and 4, Vietnam is a very highly structured society, so to build an appropriate program, it is necessary to understand how its service system is organised and operated.

Providing more detailed suggestions on what IOs should examine during the assessment process, IOP17 and LPP2 raised the issue of the local economy and other social factors. The LP participant paid attention to the economic situation because he thought, “needs come from the specific economic conditions of the locality” (LPP2). While the IO counterpart expanded on the necessity of researching other local characteristics related to social factors, including the local level of community education and their general awareness.

In addition to paying attention to material needs, understanding the local people’s way of life was raised by an IO officer. He suggested:

They should explore the psychology of Vietnamese people, the circumstances of the people who will participate in the project, and their environment. (IOP7)

The implication of this comment is that the IOs and LPs should be informed about relevant activities and services that fit the local people's characteristics.

Other participants also recommended undertaking studies to examine the individual local features. A social work division head from a ministry department said:

We have assessed the needs accurately to clarify the need of each locality. They are different at different localities. (LPP2)

This observation reminds the service developers the importance of studying the differences between localities. Accordingly, they need to avoid the phenomenon of copying the same services for all IO project sites but rather they need to meet authentic local needs. With more than 20 years working in the social affairs area, LPP3's explanation provided clear reasoning for respecting the local distinctions. He stated: "each location has its own practical policies and care programs for the protection of people" (LPP3). This viewpoint demonstrates the necessity of exploring the uniqueness of the local social welfare system before any IO project and service program is developed and introduced, so that it can fit in the local context. This was illustrated by the IOP17's project in Hanoi. This participant claimed that their successful project was "based on the actual needs of local people in Hanoi". However, if their organisation wanted to introduce this kind of program in another place, such as in Ho Chi Minh City, it would have to be different.

During the program's needs assessments, IO and LP officers recognised that they encountered situations in which they needed to balance their organisations' strategy and principles and the local needs. An IO officer from a UN organisation said:

Programs must stem from the organisation's principles: the organisation's strategy from the headquarters to the region, and the country. Moreover, it also depends on the practical needs of the project. By combining these two things in the five-year program we have built our direction. It directs which strategies we will focus on, the form of service delivery, and the models we use. (IOP1)

This suggests IOs seek to harmonise their organisations' objectives with local needs. This comment also raises some aspects of indigenisation, which is an important consideration in developing local services. This will be discussed in more depth in Chapters 8 and 9.

From a LP participant's experiences, when IOs find themselves being weighed down by local expectations, they should make decisions based on the findings of the needs assessment about the necessity and feasibility of meeting local needs. He thought:

They need to select the most risky, the most needed, and the most feasible problem. If they determine it is necessary but not feasible, I am sure that when the project is introduced, it will not work. (LPP15)

This section has presented participants' ideas on how to conduct a valuable needs assessment. Ideas and comments turned on identifying local material and psychosocial needs. Concerning the local material demand, participants suggested examining the economic situation and structures. The social and psychological factors were discussed in relation to people's education levels and perceptions, the psychology of the locals, and their environment. There was also a thoughtful warning on respecting local individual characteristics in order to produce an appropriate service program.

To continue with this topic, another important element in program needs assessment - clients' needs assessment - is discussed in the following section.

6.2.2 Assessing Clients' Needs

IO and LP officers, in addition to a careful local needs assessment, thought it particularly important to assess clients' needs. What they wanted to emphasise in their responses was the necessity of understanding actual needs of both children and their families. This was seen as a crucial start for developing an appropriate service program.

Regarding the needs assessment of children, both IOs and LPs stressed the importance of looking at each group of vulnerable children's circumstances, psychological characteristics, and demographic information. Importantly, they highlighted assessing each individual child's need. A project coordinator from an IO interviewee claimed that a service program "first has to answer the needs of vulnerable children" (IOP13). She used her past project on child trafficking as an illustration that had provided a useful lesson on how important it was to build a service program based on assessing clients' needs. Her organisation's project was

conducted from 2003 to 2006 and helped the victims of human trafficking, including children and young girls. At that time, there were a few similar projects in some of the provinces and they were well run. However, when they operated the same program in their project site, it turned out it was not so relevant because there were only a few victims who returned to the area and did had different needs. As an LP officer highlighted:

First the IOs need to understand the real situation and get adequate information about groups of clients. (LPP13)

For him and his colleagues, a relevant needs assessment should cover clients' characteristics and demands and lead to an appropriate service design.

As well, when assessing clients and their families' needs, it is necessary to consider the clients' benefits.

Before they develop any program, IOs should not look at their own benefits. Instead, they need to ask how the program will benefit local clients. (IOP9)

This view appears to be referring to the professional principle of the benefits for clients being at the centre of services. For this officer, only by approaching the service in this way can the IOs obtain the commitment and engagement of their clients; as the Vietnamese expression states, they need to 'open the hearts' of clients and the community people to receive the program.

Moving to more detail on client assessments, two different IO staff officers listed elements that had to be covered, such as children's physical characteristics, origins, psychologies, difficulties, and circumstances.

First with the children, themselves, we have to understand children's circumstances, including their family, psychological and any physical issues, and their past. We must understand them. (IOP10)

Expressing the same opinion, IOP7 said:

They need to look at children's psychophysiology, whether they are having any difficulties, any obstacles. And even why that child has such circumstances. (IOP7)

For these two participants, these matters were valuable for identifying the real needs of disadvantaged children for professional services.

Concerning the principle of individualisation, three IO staff drew attention to the individual needs of children. One young staff member of a participant IO said that the children's needs were "different case by case" (IOP18). So she stressed that it was essential to gather detailed information from each vulnerable child. IOP10 agreed: "children's needs are also quite diverse and organisations must cover all needs" (IOP10). This was because each was an individual with her or his own psychological characteristics. In addition, IOP14 clearly suggested considering age and gender factors in developing services.

First we should design intervention programs based on clients' age. I mean, clearly, that the needs of each group are different. The organisation also has to pay attention to the different needs of both girls and boys. (IOP14)

She provided an illustration of her project on friendly discipline, which guides the teachers how to discipline children appropriately and avoid using corporal punishments, developed by giving serious attention to the age differences between children from primary and secondary schools. By doing so, their program provided services for children at different developmental stages.

Families play an important role in the helping process. Thus, families must be included in the program needs assessment process. As a project coordinator said:

We need to do assessment with the family. Usually we ask the family for the best solution they would choose based on their own resources. Then the program provides what the family cannot provide. (IOP19)

This means that conducting a good family assessment gives the service program developers a sense of how to engage the family in helping their children based on their own resources with some IO support. Sharing the same ideas, but in a different way, IOP18 stressed how assessment could help IOs find relevant clients.

When we conduct assessments we can learn whether the family is in difficult circumstances. They are the target groups for which we seek to provide support. (IOP18)

Basically, assessing clients' needs was an essential part of service program development. Both IO and LP officers commented on the necessity of including clients and their families' needs in program design in order to have an effective service program for disadvantaged children. Attention has been paid to the issues of clients'

characteristics, their environment, and family conditions, which encourages a client centred approach in supportive programs. This is a professional change in the development of services for vulnerable children in Vietnam.

The next aspect to be addressed is IO experiences in conducting a needs assessment.

6.2.3 How to Conduct Needs Assessments

There were several approaches employed in conducting needs assessments by IOs in cooperation with LPs. Some IOs conducted surveys and research about their prospective clients, families and communities. Others used a direct method via home visits. Some combined surveys and home visits in order to provide reliable input for service development.

IOP15 thought it was important to survey the local community to identify their issues and problems. The service would then agree to support the most serious problems they felt they could address. IOP14 spoke of how her program for children in reform schools had been designed based on their survey of vulnerable children and their teachers.

When the project was started, we surveyed children as well as teachers who act as 'police' at reform schools. (IOP14)

Information collected from this survey was used as the basis for building their service program. For example, the finding that children often had psychological difficulties when they entered the schools was included in the design of the counselling service.

LP officers also appreciated the importance of conducting scientific activities, such as surveys, in order to ensure a quality needs assessment.

First of all, it is important to conduct a survey to collect all the information about children, their families, and communities through our administrative management systems. (LPP3)

The above comment from a leader of DOLISA confirms the necessity of a survey in order to have a good understanding of the locality and to provide consultations for policy in accordance with the local macroeconomic conditions.

Importantly, the active participation of local partners in this process is noted. An example was provided by the head of a kindergarten in a mountainous district of Hanoi. In collaboration with her school, an IO carried out a survey to assess the local situation including infrastructure conditions and resources as well as talking with poor families in the area. The schoolteachers were invited to conduct the survey because they “knew very well which child was in a difficult circumstance” (LPP5). This was supported by a community collaborator’s comment of how community Women’s Association members had participated in an IO’s survey for developing an outreach program.

It is true that it is not like coming to the commune and hearing a report. We had to come to each family and do the survey. I must say the program did the survey very carefully. (LPP6)

She explained that they came to each household and conducted the survey directly to assess the family’s problems and available resources so that they could provide relevant support. By involving LPs in a needs assessment survey, this IO had taken advantage of using the local work force in assessing and identifying available resources that could facilitate the service activities when program was introduced. In addition, this engaged local participation from the initial stage and showed the IOs’ respect for local people. As LPP14 noted, this was beneficial because “they were not imposing their views on the community and we need a system like that” (LPP14).

After the initial survey, in order to assess whether the children and families were suitable as target clients, some IOs went further by conducting home visits to undertake an extra needs assessment again to ensure accurate client needs were identified. A project coordinator contended:

We have to do the assessment not just based on what we heard. So if this person is in difficult circumstances, we have to go and see directly. (IOP19)

The same procedure was described by an LP officer who was involved in an IO’s needs assessment in her community:

They [the IO’s staff] came to see families in difficult circumstances which were recommended by the communal Women’s Association. They wanted to see the real family circumstances and considered providing prompt support. (LPP6)

In her description, after the IO got a list of proposed children and families in need provided by LP, the IO officers visited every family for direct assessments on each family. This confirms the effort of both IO and LP in finding the appropriate clients to support.

Finding the key resource persons in the community, such as the local representatives, officials, beneficiaries, and direct staff and inviting them to participate in the assessment survey is a useful strategy in collecting relevant information for service design. LPP2 described his organisation's successful experience in making the policies that met the clients' needs from IO programs based on community key resource persons through field visits, workshops, and individual consultations.

In short, needs assessments have been seen as a key step in developing appropriate service programs and models for disadvantaged children. Therefore, both IO and LP officers were interested in giving suggestions and practical experiences on this theme. For them, it was important to study the local context and economic conditions, culture, politics, and the real needs of vulnerable children and their families. Local assessments provided valuable understanding about their people, economic, and political conditions, particularly the local welfare system. These were valuable inputs to ensure the service program was designed to cater for the locality. Significantly, the needs assessments of children and their families were crucial in developing an appropriate service for vulnerable children. Indeed, there were many factors that should be covered in assessing children and families' needs, such as children's social and psychological characteristics, living environment, and family conditions and resources. In addition, participants also discussed different ways of conducting a needs assessment through surveys, home visits and a combination of other methods, such as direct meetings with stakeholders and individual consultations. Noticeably, participants' practical experiences show the importance of different local stakeholders' participation in the needs assessments. An accurate needs assessment informs the building of an appropriate service program.

To further explore the issues and challenges during the process of service building, the next section discusses the difficulties of professionalising services for disadvantaged children.

6.3 Difficulties Faced during Professionalising Services

This section explores the participants' ideas about the challenges that IOs encountered during the process of developing professional services for disadvantaged children. Even though some of the difficulties have been mentioned in Chapter 5, this section focuses on the challenges from clients and their families, the local administration system, communities, and other pressures on IOs.

6.3.1 Difficulties from Children and Their Families

6.3.1.1 Challenges from Children

Most of the comments in this area stressed the demands in dealing with clients' emotional and psychological problems and getting children and their families' cooperation in the problem solving process.

Some of the staff found that it was difficult to open the hearts of their children, especially in initial helping process. A foster mother shared:

My biggest difficulty is dealing with children's emotions. When they came here, most of them had difficulty in sharing their painful stories with anybody. (IOP20)

She said that she had nearly five years of experience living with children day by day, however, how to build rapport and trust with them was still a challenge. It took her a long time to be able to work out how to support these children. This informs the IOs of the need for paying more attention to capacity building for IO direct practitioners because they are the ones directly engaged in providing services. IOP9 expressed the same concern:

Many times we found it was very difficult because the child had to live in that environment for a quite long time and how to help the child integrate in the new environment and meet our expectations was a problem. Many children were not open. Because they had kept themselves closed up for a long time, they did not want to share. (IOP9)

She told the story of a child living in very difficult circumstances. The child's mother had left the family. She was living with a drug abusing father. She was often beaten and had no one to care for her and no support. Therefore, as this IO officer saw it, the

child could not trust the outside environment. It took considerable time for this girl to integrate into their organisation's supportive environment.

There were other difficulties in attaining children's engagement in the helping process. In the case of IOP11, she encountered children who "cannot focus their whole mind on the program, cannot overcome their difficulties, and their perception is very limited" (IOP11). IOP8 had the same problem when she helped a child who did not want to be in her program. She explained that this child could not believe a vocation would give him a more stable future. The only thing he wanted to do was continue selling postcards on the street. What the child expected to get from their project was money. Indeed, the child in this scenario is not mistaken. What he had been doing was dealing with financial reality of his life and his family. This suggests being aware of developing service programs that both help the child to address their immediate needs and, more importantly, to help him change his life orientation and provide an opportunity to establish a solid future.

IO officers also encountered the children's misunderstanding their helping process, as IOP7 raised:

Many times they have wrong thinking about us. They are here only for two years, we cannot help them change. Sometimes I feel helpless. (IOP7)

This problem occurs in many direct service programs, as children are not adequately informed. Thus, it is important to take into consideration how to help them understand the programs and professional procedure. Moreover, it suggests to have a support system for staff themselves to help them overcome difficulties at work.

6.3.1.2 Challenges from Children's Families

In addition to the challenges during service delivery with children, IO projects have to deal with obstacles from the children's families. Participants showed their concerns about families' limited awareness of child abuse, child rearing as well as the physical obstacles in approaching the families. In regard to these issues, an IO officer said:

Especially in case of children being sexually abused, the family wants to keep this information secret. They often try to negotiate for mediation without paying any attention to serious psychological impacts on the child. So they do not think of having long-term support for the child. It is really a big difficulty for

social work practice at the community level. Because local people think it's their own family's issue or an individual problem. (IOP5)

This participant's particular difficulty was how to help the family change their perception of child sexual abuse. Importantly, they needed to know the consequences of the incidence on their child and call for professional support. This attitude towards sexual abuse appears to be a common situation that happens in many rural and mountainous areas in Vietnam. Affected families try to keep the abuse secret and want to solve the problem with the perpetrators within the families. They have reasons to do so, because if sexual abuse cases are exposed, this will not only have grave consequences on the present and future lives of their children, but also result in disadvantages for the families and the communities. Their concern raises the question for professional service providers of how to make sexually abused children and their families' conscious of social work principles and professional interventions.

Because family members seem to think that child abuse is only a family issue, they are reluctant to confide in service providers. The comment from an LP was an illustration of this worry.

Families are in opposition to us. They do not want other people know about their problems. They do not think they need any support. Thus to approach them and gather information is much more difficult. (LPP14)

In this case, if they cannot collect information about the clients and their environment, it would be very hard to work with the families in developing a support plan for the disadvantaged children. Thus, in order to get the family's cooperation, service providers need to use their knowledge and skills in 'breaking the ice' in approaching children's families.

Another issue touched upon by an IO participant concerned about the families' misunderstandings and misperceptions of child care. She noted:

What we want to do is to help the child but families think differently. For example, we provided them with some funds to help them raise their income. But they did not think that they needed to buy nutritious food for their children after they got more money. Instead, they thought of buying a television. They believed that if their children had always been provided with poor food and they still survived and matured, what was the point here? (IOP17)

The challenge of the situation of IOP19 was different. They had to deal with resistance from children's parents in improving children's circumstances. This IO stated:

Some people do not have the motivation to earn extra money to support the child. Although the level of meeting their children's needs is very low they are not aware of. (IOP19)

According to this officer, the families seemed to be excluded from updated information about child care and protection. So their organisation's strategy was to work with them closely and help them to gradually change their perception.

Working in communities in difficult circumstances means that the project staff need to be prepared to support children's families with simple tasks due to their limited education. As noted by an LP officer:

During implementation there have been difficulties. Our teachers sometimes have to help the parents write the application because many of them do not know how to write applications. Indeed, they cannot write. (LPP5)

This kindergarten head master said that their patience, their love of children, and their commitment gave them energy to support children and their families in her mountainous community.

A different LP participant who worked directly in a community continued the story about challenges in working with parents due to their limited understandings about IO project requirements.

Parents were not familiar with procedures, such as the need to get their written consent allowing their children to participate in the project. The parents feel imposed upon when asked for their commitment. In fact it is a real difficulty. (LPP14)

It can be seen that even though this IO project attempted to ensure the rights and benefits for children who participated in project, this is difficult to put it in practice because the parents views those procedures as foreign and intimidating. Helping those parents to change their thinking and, particularly, to get used to professional ways of helping children seems to be an important task.

In summary, challenges that have been raised by participants include difficulties from clients and their families. The first challenge that they needed to overcome was

dealing with their clients' psychological hardship, which arose from their disadvantaged circumstances and their misunderstandings of the helping process. Additionally, the difficulties from children's families, such as their limited awareness about child abuse, child care and needs, and their low level of cooperation and knowledge about society, created obstacles that IO program needed to address. Participants' comments clearly illustrated the need for equipping practitioners with professional knowledge and skills.

Difficulties in communities are addressed in the following section.

6.3.2 Difficulties in Communities

Community difficulties were mentioned by participants in relation to local prejudice and attitudes towards disadvantaged children, child care, and supportive environments for service operation.

First, during the provision of services for children, many IO officers found that they were in the problematic situation of dealing with people's prejudices, especially concerning disadvantaged children. An IO officer shared:

I have to say honestly that there is bias against our children with disabilities. Many Vietnamese people still discriminate in terms of social class and academic qualifications. Many of our children have encountered that. These children felt that they were like others, they did not miss their legs or their arms, they had no problem, but they questioned why they did not have the opportunity to communicate with everyone. (IOP9)

This perception became a major obstacle for children, in her program, to integrate into the community after they finished. People often valued graduates from public academic programs rather than non-governmental and vocational training. This participant sadly shared the story of her student who was slightly lame after an accident. This boy was in an internship and at the beginning he was accepted by a hotel to make cocktails, in which he was trained. However, after a week he was sent to the kitchen area to wash dishes because of customers' complaints that the hotel did not have enough money to pay for a 'normal' person and had to hire a person with a disability. A comparable story was told by another IO officer, but in this case the boy had contracted hepatitis B.

A boy told me that he passed the interview and was accepted to work for a hotel, but he was refused after he told them honestly that he had hepatitis B. At that time, he was very shocked. He phoned me and said that he might stop his career. (IOP8)

This officer tried to support this boy to find another place where he could be accepted. However, it is just a temporary solution. This is a serious problem since these vulnerable children will become more disadvantaged if this type of discrimination continues.

Second, besides community prejudice about disadvantaged children, IO programs also had to deal with inappropriate community attitudes about child care and protection. Two attitudes stood out. The first was in respect of child rights. As IOP13 pointed out:

There are some difficulties when working with the community. For example, the different attitude, in respecting children's rights in showing their ideas and comments, is one of the challenges. In a community forum for the children, it is recommended that children have to make their own decisions of how to do it. However, in some places, the adults did everything for children because they thought 'children were just children'. (IOP13)

This issue challenged this IO worker in integrating the child's rights in the projects and programs. This officer noted that it took a long time to change the thinking of communities. It was because they clung to their 'cultures'. She gave another example of a project introduced to a school. In a district forum with leaders, instead of letting children freely expressed their ideas and comments, the teacher wrote the questions for the children because they were afraid that the children might make mistakes.

Moreover, changing community perceptions about new child care models was another difficulty. IOP3 said that her organisation's project encountered the problem in persuading local people to change their minds about new kinds of alternative care. She stated:

Foster care exists as kinship care for relatives, but the idea of nonrelated people providing care for children is still a relatively unknown concept in Vietnam. It is very difficult to change the attitudes and perceptions of local people. (IOP3)

The same situation occurred when a participant IO introduced a care model for children infected and affected by HIV/AIDs. IOP1 contended:

When [this organisation] started to support children infected and affected by HIV/AIDs, they were taken care of in hospitals. There was no other place to take care of them as they were suffering from discrimination. People were afraid and they did not dare to be involved in providing services. (IOP1)

It took some time to help people understand HIV/AIDs and change their ways of thinking about providing care for these vulnerable children.

Third, the challenge of communities' understanding of the social work profession and its services was mentioned by IOP4. She argued that:

The greatest difficulty is instilling understanding about the social work profession and why we need this profession. At this moment, this obstacle is still an issue. (IOP4)

For her, it was a big challenge to advocate the necessity of this profession's services for vulnerable people, particularly children in difficult circumstances.

Generally, the difficulties in communities concerned three aspects. First the discrimination against children with disabilities or diseases prevented disadvantaged children from having opportunities to set up their future life and integrate into the society. Second, people's perception of new care models created delay in the introduction of new services for vulnerable children. Last, the lack of understanding about the social work profession brought more challenges for the development of this profession's services.

6.3.3 Social Environment

Some social environmental issues are seen as obstacles by IO participants for introducing service programs. These include: people's lack of interest in social problems, the preference for 'performance', the misconception about INGOs, and the limited involvement of media in social issues.

Regarding the loss of people's interest in social issue, IOP15 shared:

At the moment, people are more concerned about earning a living, so their level of interest in social problems is minimal. In some villages, the parents have gone to cities and their children are left with grandparents. It is very difficult to find the parents to talk to them about their children. (IOP15)

By saying that, she stressed her organisational challenge in getting people's engagement in addressing children's problems, especially parents. As a consequence

of a market economy and globalisation, parents need to immigrate to urban areas to find work and their children are left behind with older people and, potentially, without adequate care.

One IO officer discussed an interesting problem, that is the stress on 'performance', the preference for the 'showing off' phenomenon (in Vietnamese, "bệnh thành tích").

In Vietnam the 'performance' disease is very tiring, particularly when you are working in the field of LISA. You know, there is a scale of points for each area and they try to get as many points as possible so that they can compete with others. Then, sometimes, they try to hide or underreport the number of abuse cases. (IOP12)

For this interviewee, this affected the number of published abuse cases as well as preventing victims from accessing proper services. This point was illustrated by another IO participant.

Due to the mechanisms and nature of mass organisations in Vietnam, which prefer 'showing off' their achievements, they tend to keep secret the cases which are at risk of causing difficulties in developing services. (IOP5)

This officer criticised the way in which some local mass organisations tried to fabricate reports so that they looked good and ignored reporting the real abuse cases. Consequently, this has negative impacts on the children's life and on professional development.

There is also the problem of the social acceptance of the concept of INGOs, which was noted by four IO officers as an organisational difficulty. IOP6 shared:

Our organisation is still considered as an INGO, and with the letter "I" in front, it doesn't relate to the current system. (IOP6)

She compared the NGO model that she observed in Thailand where NGOs were allowed to implement social policies and allocated budgets for providing foster care as well as other resources. For her, the non-governmental sector in Thailand had received support from the government, thus NGOs working in child care and protection were not only seen as equal to the government, but also received more funding. That means this sector was given power and authority. She showed her disappointment when talking about her organisation's involvement in advocacy work. She said she had tried

to advocate for the foster care model, but “my voice is not powerful enough, although I am conscious of the problem” (IOP6).

Two other IO participants talked about their service model as an illustration for the lack of recognition for their organisation. While IOP8 said that they “have not yet been recognised” (IOP8), the other felt unhappy with people’s understanding of NGOs.

[This organisation] is an NGO and people do not believe that the program we have provided for disadvantaged children and youth exists. Many people think this is a deceptive activity. Thus, this lack of trust causes many difficulties for us in our [service users’] enrolment or contact with agencies to conduct activities for them. (IOP11)

A similar attitude was expressed by IOP13.

I think the government may not consider the important role of international organisations in contributing to the promotion of social development and the country. (IOP13)

She felt that the value of IO roles was tied not only to how much money they could provide, but also how this funding was used to improve people’s wellbeing.

One more issue noted by IOP8 was the Vietnamese people’s the lack of interest in supporting her INGO’s service operation for vulnerable children. She stated:

In fact, now there are many individuals who are ready to help, but I really must say I see more support from foreign countries but indeed very little from Vietnam itself. (IOP8)

She said that there were many potential resources available in Vietnam, however, these strengths had not yet been mobilised due to the lack of interest from local organisations and enterprises.

The lack of involvement of the mass media was considered another difficulty for service delivery. As it mentioned by IOP10:

What I think is that a lot rests in information and communication. It looks like the current media are not interested in social affairs at all. (IOP10)

This officer explained that he could not see media, such as television and newspapers, playing an active role in broadcasting programs about disadvantaged children, and especially introducing social services.

In regard to difficulties from the social environment, all of the ideas raised by IO participants identified issues that IO service programs have to be aware of. First, there were the changes caused by the rapid development of a market economy that directly affected both the way in which traditional child care methods were delivered and the way the family was structured with a loss of care and interest by parents in their children. Second, participants were concerned about the local preference for 'performance' that often prevented the presentation of abuse cases. Third, four IO officers shared their sentiment on Vietnamese society's perceptions of IOs, particularly INGOs, and IOs' contribution to social development, which they felt was not adequately appreciated. Lastly, the IOs touched upon the lack of mass media involvement in promoting professional services for vulnerable children and families.

Other concerns about the local system will be analysed in the next section.

6.3.4 Concerns about the Local System

This section presents participants' two main concerns about the local system. They include: the administrative protocol with international partners and leadership issues.

6.3.4.1 Administrative Protocol with International Partners

Three participants expressed their concern about administrative protocol that caused difficulties for IO programs. IOP8 shared her experience that the local protocol had had consequences on the organisational recruitment of clients for a vocational program.

Sometimes the administrative procedure in Vietnam is very, very cumbersome. Many times, when we asked for conducting public sharing about our enrolment, we had to wait for approval and have it checked out. It was very difficult. Like the enrolment recently, we wanted to work through DOLISA but it was two months later before we were allowed to do it. By then, our enrolment had already closed. (IOP8)

She explained that much time was taken in processing their proposal because her organisation was an INGO set up by an overseas Vietnamese person. This, somehow, prevented them from organising more collaborative activities when enrolling the most disadvantaged clients because they had to go through many administrative steps to process their proposals.

The other two comments focused on the inconvenience of a foreign staff member visiting during field trips due to the administrative procedure for foreigners. IOP16 noted:

I didn't know I needed permission to go Da Nang from the provincial Department of Foreign Affairs. And it was quite sensitive down there. Basically, I was told that going to Da Nang I needed to make sure that I had the right permission. Actually it's my concern, fair enough. (IOP16)

This foreign IO officer explained that, because he was not informed about this procedure before his field trip, he was caught by the local authorities. However, he was allowed to finish the trip and it was a lesson for him and other IO officers. A similar point was made by a Vietnamese IO officer.

In fact, there is a concern in arranging field trips for foreigners in visiting communities. When foreigners come to communities, we need to report to the local authorities how many days they will stay. For security reasons, the review process is cumbersome. (IOP5)

That was one of the main reasons why his organisation could not send as many international experts, as it would like, to help the local communities and limits international experts' opportunity to better understand local communities. The lack of time spent in communities thwarts their ability to make recommendations for improvements.

6.3.4.2 Leadership Issues

During program implementations, both LP and IO officers found that they had to face leadership issues, including the change of leadership positions and approaching high-ranking leaders. First, an LP participant commented on the changes in leadership resulting in difficulties in orientating their programs.

We have had the first difficulty about the changing of leaders. When the project was deployed, we had one leader. Then, near the end of the project an election took place and we had another leader. So we had to report on the entire project again. And we had to adjust to the new leader's working style at certain points. (LPP14)

This has made her project work harder and caused some confusion in managing project activities. In addition to this, this LP officer said that they also had to deal with leaders who did not have experience in working with IO projects, thus they were not

familiar with the projects' norm and management. So it took time for project staff to bring the new leaders up to date and get their support.

Another leadership issue was expressed by IOP4 in regard to approaching high authorities. She commented:

One of the big difficulties is approaching the high authorities as I am in charge of a key program in promoting the social work profession in Vietnam. For example, to grab attention and interest of the ministers and the vice ministers is quite challenging. If the initiative cannot reach the leaders, it is very difficult to have a successful program. (IOP4)

Working in advocacy work, this officer found it difficult to attract the leaders' attention to social work, as it was a new area. In this sense, it can be seen that having good local leadership and getting their interest is an important factor in order to facilitate the work smoothly and successfully.

This section has presented participants' concerns about the local system. They were described as the difficulties in the local administrative protocols and leadership issues. For IO officers, the administrative requirements of the local partners took time and consisted of many steps that affected the speed and quality of IO project activities, especially when they prevented the involvement of international experts in community fieldwork. In addition, changes in leadership after each election, and lack of experience in working in IO projects created obstacles during the implementation of programs.

During their work, IOs also have to face challenges from their own system. The following section will explore this issue.

6.3.5 Difficulties from International Organisations

This section presents participants' discussions on the difficulties from IOs themselves during their working process with LPs in implementing projects and programs. They include: pressure from donors, being far away from project sites, and financial matters.

6.3.5.1 Donors' Requirements

Two IO participants shared that their organisations sometimes experienced tensions from the donors. On the one hand, the first officer stated their dilemma in bridging the donors' requirements and LP competence. She noted:

We are under pressure to meet the donors' standards whereas the conditions of our partners cannot meet those standards. (IOP2)

She said her officer was stuck in the middle of negotiations between the donors' demands and the LP resources. They tried to work with both sides to make sure they kept the donors' standards as well as adjusting those standards to fit in with local conditions.

On the other hand, the second officer brought up the issue of keeping up the quality of project proposal while meeting the deadline for the fund application.

In fact, we developed a project by desk reviews, collecting data in a big rush because of the short notice of time for the proposal application. There was not enough time to go to the community and conduct a survey. There was no selection of the most needed issues. Therefore, sometimes the project does not aim to meet the needs of the people in the community. It is wasteful in terms of money and our efforts as well. (IOP13)

This comment informs of the danger of a project failing due to the lack of adequate needs assessment from vulnerable clients and local communities. If that is the case, the project neither provides qualified services for vulnerable children nor utilises the resources effectively. Hence, IO officers seek donors' understanding and a change in fund application procedures so that their projects can be developed based on the real needs assessed in the local context.

6.3.5.2 Being far away from Project Sites

Being far away from project sites was raised as a problem by officers in a participant IO that provides direct services. They wanted to expand their service programs in communities in difficult circumstances. However, they had to face the issue of being far away from project sites because this prevented them from providing more direct services due to the limited human resources. For example, during a field trip to a

project site, the researcher saw a need to counsel a family. However, IOP18 indicated she could not provide that. As she explained:

This is because the time interval for each field visits is long in every three months and the location is also far away. This results in a lack of advice to local staff and counselling for families. We cannot monitor the situation closely. We just visit and encourage them. (IOP18)

This officer felt very sorry that she and her colleagues could not be based at the project sites in order to update the clients' situations and provide timely professional services to vulnerable children and their families. The question here is how to meet the local people's needs and mobilise the available community resources with limited capacity. Another IO colleague said that their staff tried to have direct meetings with children and their families during their field trips in order to get additional assessment, but due to time limits and the frequency of each trip they could not gather all the information needed. She complained: "that is a headache because we still cannot always meet all the children" (IOP19).

6.3.5.3 Financial Issues

In regard to financial issues, three areas of concern are identified. They include: the need for funding, cuts in funding, and inadequate local investment.

First, for both IOs and LPs, the lack of funding prevented IOs and their programs being fully developed. Relating to the need for funds, a country director of an IO said:

Our organisation's difficulty is that we do not have enough funds. If we have more money, we can organise a workshop to share what we have done in foster care for other LPs and IOs. However, we just quietly do it ourselves. (IOP6)

She commented that they provided professional service for abandoned and orphaned children, and it proved to be useful and applicable. Whereas, what the government program was doing was different and she wanted to share their practice with the government for their consideration. However, it could not be done. In this sense, their professional services have not yet been recognised by the government agencies and organisations. Another IO officer added:

I must say that the difficulty is the budget. We need a sufficient budget to pay for the new job title [social worker]. However, where should we get the funding from? It is a very difficult question. (IOP4)

For this officer, the budget constraints from the LPs caused a delay in social work professional development, especially in creating jobs for this work force in the public system, particularly at lower governmental levels, such as in districts and communities.

Besides that, the lack of budget also affected the effectiveness of program operation, as pointed out by IOP5.

This is also a difficulty for INGOs. We do not have enough budgets to hire professional international experts. We mostly depend on voluntary resources, which are unstable, and sometimes we cannot find appropriate specialists. (IOP5)

For IO interviewees, the deficit in the budget to support clients could lead to a failure in attaining expected outcomes. For example, IOP18 stated:

The capital we are granted now is small so it is hard to make changes. We can only grant three to four million Vietnam Dong [about 150 to 200 Au\$]. That is not much for a family in poverty to generate income to support their children. (IOP18)

There appears to be no difference in the concerns mentioned by the three LP participants. All had budget difficulties in developing professional services. LPP12 noted the challenges in expanding professional services, while LPP9 spoke about his difficulty in making a qualified public awareness program.

Due to the insufficient budget resources, the services for solving problems sometimes are limited, although there are services on counselling and alternative care, they are not enough. (LPP12)

Budget constraints are common difficulty. So sometimes we want to make good communication products for communities but we could not do so, because we did not have enough budgets to purchase quality equipment. (LPP9)

This problem also occurred in the project on developing SWSCs. LPP3, the director of a SWSC, said that because they did not have a stable budget allocation for the activity of the centre, they had difficulties in introducing their services for vulnerable people and conducting outreach programs in communities. It is likely that within the current local condition they could not provide a service system that met the critical needs for

children. Even though they were aware of this, it was out of their control due to resource shortages.

The second challenge mentioned by the two IO participants was the cut in the budget for IO programs due to the economic crisis and changes in the local context when Vietnam was reclassified as a lower middle-income country. IOP13 said:

In the 90s, it was rather easy for IOs to mobilise funds from individuals, organisations, and overseas governments. In recent years, the money sources from other countries, from Europe, have reduced. We are dependent on the goodwill of the donors. This is one of the difficulties of INGOs recently. (IOP13)

While recently IOs have received lower funding from overseas, it is also hard to get more funding from domestic donors and many project activities have been cut off. In contrast, the number of disadvantaged children in some forms, such as abused and abandoned children is increasing. IOP5 believed:

One of the biggest difficulties is the budget, the budgets of IOs are very small and that does not make much impact on change. (IOP5)

The third concern of limited funding from local sources was pointed out by the two IO participants. For them, it was very important that the local government should share their responsibility in providing a budget for IO service programs. IOP3 said:

Money is a very real constraint; unless more money from the government is invested in caring for children who are in State care. Nothing to be sure [there is no way to be sure] that the condition of care in State care is going to be at the same standard that they are now with the IOs' support. (IOP3)

The key issue in this situation was to get more involvement from the local government in providing funds to keep the quality of services for children at the same level as with IO support. That was why IOP12 recommended:

the government should provide a framework to allocate a budget for the LISA field, such as issuing a decree allowing them to have funding. What can they do if there aren't any resources provided? As you know, not all 63 provinces have resources to support services programs in communities. (IOP12)

This suggestion advocates the commitment of the central government to budgets for child care and protection otherwise services for vulnerable children will not be developed in a professional manner.

In short, this section has explored the three main difficulties IOs experienced: donors' pressures, being located far from project sites, and financial constraints. Participants were concerned about the quality of their project proposals due to the short notice for fund application. There was a risk of missing the real needs of clients and local communities if there was not enough time and resources for preparation. The final, but important concern was regarding financial issues. IO and LP participants stressed the need for funds to run their services. They believed it was necessary to have active local government participation in allocating a domestic budget for child care and protection.

The final section of this chapter will analyse the important indicator of project success—the issue of sustainability.

6.4 The Issues of Sustainability

This section will address the question of how the concept of program sustainability is understood and analysed. Participants' responses show that sustainability is a crucial factor in any IO program; however, it is also a challenge for both IOs and LPs in the development of professional service models for disadvantaged children. Participants defined sustainability by its long-term effects and impacts on the life of clients, as well as how it was mainstreamed into local policy and became part of local services.

Noting the importance of sustainability, IOP10 said:

Sustainability is very important, [this organisation] is pursuing sustainability closely to create jobs for children that they can live with. (IOP10)

This IO had a clear goal of sustainability and had developed a successful service for children and youth in difficult circumstances. What made this IO staff proud was that their service users, after two years in their vocational training program, could find a job and earn their living. This was echoed by another IO colleague.

People are often talking about project sustainability. It is not only present on paper. For example, our program is sustainable when our graduates have jobs. And they even take management positions and get high wages. (IOP8)

In his opinion, sustainability was something that is confirmed by practice as it was with his CHL model. This hot line has now become a public service for children and families in Vietnam.

However, it should be noted that maintaining program sustainability is a big challenge. Participants identified six key factors for sustainability that IOs and LPs need to take into account during program implementation. The following section discusses these factors.

6.4.1 Local Commitment

The first factor was local commitment. An IO participant believed:

The prerequisite factor is the continuing commitment from the LPs in sustaining it [service program]. For many years I've been involving in many IO programs, I have witnessed that of the many IO projects closed after the IO withdrawal due to the lack of resources. One of the decisive factors in sustaining these programs is the LP engagement. (IOP12)

What this child protection coordinator wanted to highlight was the need for LP involvement in continuing the service program during and, importantly, after the initial project ended. The lesson he learnt from other projects was that during the IO program implementation, they received encouragement from LPs; however, this was not continued after IO withdrawal. This was due to the lack of LP commitment in continuing IO efforts. Experience from IOP14 showed that an IO should have an assertive view in persuading LPs to take responsibilities in maintaining the IO programs, especially services models. She argued:

When developing the service model we were desperately active in getting LP engagement. At the time of negotiating with our LP, our project manager was very persistent in getting their agreement. (IOP14)

She valued the contribution of her organisation's leader in sending a strong message to local leaders at the ministerial level in getting their consent to provide support during service model introduction and after it ended.

Having the same thoughts about sustainability, four LP counterparts strongly support the idea of getting local commitment throughout IOs programs. LPP7 said:

Commitment is most important. Once projects are implemented, the local authorities always need a commitment that people should continue even when the programs finish. At first, everyone always promises to immediately sign the contract; however, it needs to give them a push to fulfil their commitment. (LPP7)

For him, it was important to ‘push’ the LPs in order to secure their commitment to take over the program activities. However, in reality, he said that IO programs might face difficulties in keeping the project sustainable because of the changes in leadership. The new leader only continued if he/she was interested. Hence, it is necessary to advocate for the programs to the local managing board. The necessity of local commitment was confirmed by LPP9 and LPP10 who noted:

There are several factors that contribute to a program’s sustainability. The first is a LP commitment from the beginning when the project is being implementing. It needs in full compliance. (LPP9)

At the moment, MOLISA directs the localities and IOs in small agreement programs. It is important to get the LP commitment proposal to make the IO service models into a reality. (LPP10)

This is a valuable suggestion for IOs to work with the central government level, in this case it is MOLISA, to reinforce the commitment from the local authorities to take action after IOs finish their project. This idea was shared by LPP14. He said that unless there was some attention paid by the local government, the project would not be maintained. For her, the local leaders should be ‘pushed’ to show their interest in continuing the program.

Basically, the prerequisite factor that the two IO and four LP participants stressed was getting local commitment to the whole process of IO service programs. They suggested having strong support from the central government to direct the local authorities to continue the project activities.

However, it is not enough to keep the program running; the next factor raised by participants is keeping the service program as closely attached as possible to local directions.

6.4.2 Close Attachment with the Local National Directions

Keeping programs in line with local orientations was raised by two LPs and an IO participant. For the LP participants, it was crucial to have a service program that was in line with the local policy. An LP unit leader in a government department noted:

Actually, talking about the sustainability, briefly, the important thing is that it meets the right local developmental orientations of child protection. What they

need to pay attention to is following the developmental action plans, especially the Vietnamese directions for each area of their interest. (LPP9)

He noted that the hot line project was successfully sustained because it was developed to support the government policy in meeting local developmental strategy in child care and protection. That was why after the IO gradually withdrew from program, the government agency took it over and now this hotline has become an official public service for children, families, and communities. Further evidence of this was provided by a different participant who said:

In fact, the support of [this organisation] is sustainable because it is based on national programs, national interventions, and directions. In our country, the direction of superiors to subordinates is very important. The locals cannot do things without directions from a higher level. Thus, with the direction of the higher level, the support is sustainable. (LPP11)

This, again, confirmed the way in which the local operational systems need to take Vietnam's national system into account.

On the IO side, an officer stated that even if the service program was new, IOs should try to find the supportive policy as a foundation for their project.

In order to get the program prioritised and to get local cooperation, then it must be in line with the government plans so it can be maintained. (IOP14)

In short, both LP and IO participants affirmed the significance of getting IO service programs as close as possible to local directives and social policy developmental trends in order to ensure their sustainability. This is seen as another strategy that IOs should take into consideration during the development of social work services for disadvantaged children.

Keeping IO programs relevant to local needs is also considered a key factor in program sustainability. The next section discusses this factor.

6.4.3 Local Suitability of Programs

Four participants commented on the local suitability of IOs program. Most of their ideas highlighted the relationship between the relevance of service programs to the locality and their sustainability. For example, an IO vocational training model was

continued because the developers had chosen vocations that were suitable for the local area. As the head of human resources of this organisation said:

I think, actually the sustainability of our program comes from the right selection of vocational training areas. These vocations are timely and appropriate to the local demands. (IOP8)

LPP10 critically commented on the need for IO programs to be tied to local conditions. She argued:

The basis for IO activities is that the models should be attached to local reality. Then, when IOs end their support, the local government will contribute local resources to continue the models. (LPP10)

Other participants discussed this factor by analysing the lessons learnt from their working experiences and observations. IOP19 said that one of her organisational programs was going to close because it was not suitable for the local reality. She commented:

If we evaluate the relevance of one of our programs implemented in the community, it is not high anymore, because we cannot provide much capital for a family. (IOP19)

Similarly, IOP21 pointed out the failure of one of her organisational programs due to its irrelevance to local needs. She noted:

So the program was not sustainable. It was not because there were no funds for that project. It was because we felt that we could not make it fit into the local context. So we had to stop the project. (IOP21)

This means that the program's sustainability is not only a matter of funding availability; it is how relevant a program is for the local needs and conditions. This raises the question of whether an adequate needs assessment was performed before establishing the program, or if it was a case of importing expert but knowledge.

Generally, the way in which IO programs are based in and attached to local demands and conditions is seen as another key to ensuring that the program continue to be developed and run by LPs.

In order to increase LP willingness to take over IO programs, participants also mentioned the importance of including IO programs in the local policy system, details of which will be presented next.

6.4.4 Mainstreaming International Organisation Programs into the Local Policies

For many IO and LP officers, transferring the program to the local partner successfully sustained their initiatives and efforts in helping vulnerable children and families. It is particularly important in the context of the Vietnamese structural operating system. Experience from an IO working in a UN organisation showed how important it was to advocate for the integration of service programs into the local social policies. This IO explained:

In Vietnam, if you cannot put it [the service program] into government policies, or put it into the Communist Party Meeting's resolution, or cannot integrate it into the People's Council's resolution. All of our efforts are just like playing a game [if the game finishes, it is the end]. (IOP4)

This officer used the service model of SWSC as an illustration. She was sure that if this model was not institutionalised in the MOLISA system, it would not reach fruition. Indeed, this model had just closed at the pilot stage and could not be implemented. Her colleague supported her:

Many services are at risk of being closed. It is not much for our organisation, but for NGOs the incidence of failure will go up to 70% because their voice in the advocacy campaign is weaker than that of a UN agency. Thus, any programs that cannot be included into the institutions and have guidelines through circulars, or the decisions from the governmental sector or province, they will certainly fail. (IOP2)

This comment affirms the necessity of institutionalising IO service programs and models into the local policy and structural system.

In regard to this factor, the same ideas were expressed by local counterparts. LPP10 made this point clearly:

Almost all of the services for children are aligned with policies approved by the government—they are the most sustainable. When the government approves the policy, it not only lasts for one or two years, it functions, at least, for five years or more. (LPP10)

According to this participant, by the time these models needed to be reviewed and adjusted to fit into the local context, they were still considered sustainable.

Consequently, in order to ensure stable long-term development for IO service programs, participants advocated mainstreaming programs into local policies and

directions. In addition, other participants looked at other ways of maintaining sustainability by integrating IO service activities into local programs. IOP2 emphasised that:

If there is no formal mechanism for implementation, this means the services must be integrated into the public service and put into the provincial plan. When they are included into the formal provincial plan, there is budget allocation for it. (IOP2)

This officer's organisation was successful in introducing some of their service programs at the provincial level. She learnt that this local level played an important role in directing the district and community levels in implementing the service programs. Moreover, when the IO programs ended, meaning that there was no more financial support, the funding provided by the province would be the main resource.

Another experience shared by a community participant was about how to transfer the advantages of her project with an IO into her current regular work in a community. She said that she had used the results of a program for children with disabilities in a government program.

After the project with an IO on supporting children with disabilities pulled out, I still work on rehabilitation for people with disabilities in a government health program. So we could continue support for children with disabilities. (LPP15)

To successfully transfer the service model into a local program, two LP officers provided a solution by gradually empowering the roles and responsibilities of LPs. An LP suggested:

At the beginning, [this organisation] was committed to providing 90% of the budget and the government funded 10%. Then the government funding increased and it is now a public service for children and families. [This organisation] is now mostly involved in technical support. (LPP8)

According to this LP officer, the IO was very proud that the service program initiated by them had now been transferred to the government thanks to their wise strategy right at the initial stage. The other LP officer spoke about how to encourage LPs in maintaining the IO program activities through an evidence-based approach, she stated:

At the local community level the project needs to provide the initial investment. And the next step is technology transfer. If they have created good

impact the local authorities can see this. Moreover, when it is operated well, it is easy for them to advise the locals to continue their project activities. (LPP15)

Interestingly, an IO officer shared ideas of another way of making the sustainability by handing over his IO program to a local NGO, called REACH—a local NGO specialising in vocational training and employment for Vietnam’s most disadvantaged children and youth. He said:

Our project now has shifted from focusing on the direct implementation of vocational training to building the capacity of REACH, so that they can manage our project sites. We will help REACH become a nationwide vocational training organisation for disadvantaged children and youth in Vietnam. (IOP16)

By doing so, it was hoped that this domestic NGO would continue to develop their program to serve more disadvantaged youth and people.

Generally, research participants were interested in making IO programs sustainable by mainstreaming them into local social policies and provincial developmental plans. There was agreement between IO and LP participants about the importance of this factor in ensuring that IO service programs were taken over by the LPs. Nonetheless, this work needs to be critically carried out to ensure the professional quality of services.

Not only the research participants emphasise the need to ensure that LPs are responsible for maintaining IO programs, they spoke about the other factors tied to IOs, such as the life cycle of program, which is discussed in the next section.

6.4.5 The Life Cycle of International Organisation Programs

Participants also believed that the long-term impacts of IO service programs were important to sustainability. Therefore, their ideas concentrated on the duration of program’s life cycle. IOP21 described:

If [this organisation] sets up a program in a community, it will there for a long time, 10 years, 15 years, and 17 years to make a real change. Moreover, this program will be used as evidence to advocate the central and provincial governments. Importantly, it serves as an example of successful program to the neighbouring community to adopt. (IOP21)

Planning to provide continuous support for years appears to be a good strategy in creating long-term change for a local community. This experience set a good example

of using evidence-based methods for advocacy work for social policy development. IOP14 also believed that short-term program duration could affect the IO programs' sustainability. This participant stated:

Sometimes IOs cannot fund the service program in the long term, such as for 10 or 20 years. They can only provide support for three, five, or seven years so the sustainability of the services is a challenge. (IOP14)

This officer said that her organisation was aware of lobbying and advocating policies for sustainability. However, they could not provide persuasive evidence to local governments. The same idea shared by IOP5.

This year is this program. Next year is another different program. One to two or three years cannot create an impact. Only projects that lasts 10 to 20 years can make changes. (IOP5)

A different IO participant makes a similar comment about the short-term nature of the program.

I think it is important to have a long-term strategy and it must be synchronised. For example, I see one organisation working with the community and asking funding from the WB for only six months and they only focus on training and just organise meetings. It is not effective; it is wasteful. (IOP17)

In short, discussing the issue of project life span, four IO officers mentioned the necessity of IO long-term investment in conducting service programs in order to create an impact in the local community. In addition, it was also important to use this impact as evidence to advocate to local leaders and other communities.

The next section discusses the final important factor of program sustainability—the availability of resources.

6.4.6 Resource Availability

Resource availability attracted the most concern from participants when they were talking about program sustainability. This issue was discussed in terms of having a sustainable resource and adequate financial support to maintain the programs. An LP officer explained:

I think IOs themselves always want to operate sustainably and effectively. However, this also depends on their sustainable resources. They themselves are in the process of cooperation and they want their projects to be

sustainable. And if their resources are limited and they have to call on other organisations. It is very difficult to have sustainability. (LPP2)

This comment seems to note IOs' difficulty in maintaining resources for their programs. This suggests that for further cooperation between different IOs in order to mobilise resources for project activities should be continuously developed. However, there was another concern raised by the head of a planning unit in a ministry department in regards to limited local resources to maintain the IO service programs after they were passed to LPs. She stated:

I need to say honestly that when the IOs are involved in, they have enormous resources compared to the locals. So when the IOs finish their task, the resources end. So that makes the program unsustainable. (LPP10)

This is also a worry for many IOs and LPs. Thus, it raises the issue of how to sustain the service program after the IOs withdraw. To deal with this, it requires both IOs and LPs to pay attention to working at both micro and macro levels to provide resources for their services. Furthermore, IO service programs also should be designed in a way that makes it financially feasible to transfer them to the LPs.

Practical experiences from IOP19 and LPP14 showed that many projects had closed, as there was not enough money for implementing project activities. For example, LPP14, a community worker, was sad to say that her IO community-based project had to be closed earlier due to a budget cut. She concluded:

Truly to maintain the project it is not simple. There are some activities we are not able to maintain without any funding. (LPP14)

With social entrepreneurs, the question of maintaining financial support is also a difficulty; however, they have advantages in keeping the program within their own generated resources. A beneficiary of an IO service program was very proud to say:

While we are learning, we can work for restaurants. Then we sell our products and raise an income which will come back to pay for our studying in the program. That means we are learning, and earning money. 60% to 70% of the income from the restaurant contributes to cover our living and studying expenses. (GD2)

Thanks to their business, this organisation can maintain their service. More importantly, this gives the beneficiaries confidence and power because they are provided with opportunities to contribute to their development.

Furthermore, in order to have regular financial support for service programs, IOP16 considered getting a contribution from local government's budget. He stated:

It would be nice and the easiest way to have program sustainability is getting government funding; whether it is direct government funding or through reclaiming some of the clients' subsidies. (IOP16)

In his program, he found that it was hard to run the program without any support from the government. He expected that his organisation's service program would be recognised as equal to others from public vocational training institution systems. This is seen as a fair expectation if we want to encourage different international and domestic private organisations to provide services for vulnerable people.

In short, how to have stable resources and adequate financial support is not an easy question to address. Participants' comments suggested that the IOs and LPs should examine different ways of fund raising through their donors and their fee paying services.

In summary, in this final section of the chapter, this theme has covered a range of factors that have contributed to IO service/program sustainability. These factors were related to the efforts and strategies that IOs and LPs needed to take into account from the beginning stage of service development, such as examining the way in which the service program could obtain the local commitment, or how relevant IO programs could refer to the local directives and orientations. Participants were also interested in the program suitability in the local context and making their models transferable to LPs. Additionally, the factor of resource availability was identified as an important element to keep the program sustainable. The ideas and comments stress that inform IOs and LPs should pay significant attention to developing appropriate service programs based on local systems and conditions.

6.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter has analysed the issues and challenges that IOs and LPs faced during service program development. It discussed many issues that address questions on: How to make an appropriate needs assessment, what are the difficulties during the implementation of service programs and the challenges of IOs, and how to maintain program sustainability. First, it was important to note the importance of conducting

appropriate needs assessments. Participants highlighted the inclusion of children and families' needs into service programs. This was seen as a foundation for indigenising IOs services so that they fit neatly into the local context. Second, the difficulties and challenges encountered during service professionalisation were analysed in regard to clients and their families, practices in communities, the social environment, and the local system. Additionally, challenges from IOs themselves were identified and discussed to provide valuable information for LPs to understand and try to find cooperative solutions for difficulties. Finally, participants defined service program sustainability by six factors: local commitment, a close attachment with the local directives and orientations, local suitability, mainstreaming the IO program into the local policy system, the life span of the program, and resource availability. Since sustainability is a crucial issue in IO and LP cooperation, it is important to take into consideration the way in which these factors can be applied in practice. Generally, these issues and challenges reflect difficulties of service professionalisation in Vietnam. It is important for IOs and LPs to understand these problems and collectively find appropriate solutions.

The next chapter will present the research findings on the relationship between IOs and LPs.

CHAPTER 7

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS AND LOCAL PARTNERS

7.1 Introduction

In Chapter 6, prominent issues and challenges were found to have emerged during the development of projects and programs for disadvantaged children. Issues and challenges, such as having appropriate needs assessments, being aware of difficulties arising from children themselves and families, communities, the social environment, and particularly, identifying obstacles from IOs and LPs were highlighted. This chapter furthers the discussion and analysis of IO and LP cooperative relationships. Its purpose is to address the questions: What is the nature of the collaboration and cooperation between IOs and LPs in the development of professional services? And what other factors affect this? The Chapter begins with a discussion of some IO structural matters that significantly impact mutual collaboration. This part provides an introduction to the IOs' policy to move to an integrated pattern of working together, their working orientation, and bureaucracy, difficulties in relation to donors, and IO networking and internal cooperation. A study of IO and LP cooperation is presented in the second section. The Chapter finishes by an examination of international consultation and its influences on the effectiveness of IO and LP collaboration.

7.2 Highlight Points about International Organisation Structure and Mechanism

This section aims to provide an introduction to key features of IO structures and mechanisms affecting IO orientation and cooperation with LPs in service professionalisation. It covers the participants' perspectives on the tendency of IOs to merge, such as the one policy adopted by the UN and other big INGOs. The discussion considers the conflict between focusing on direct work or advocacy. The difficulties and challenges, particularly with donors regarding how these factors have pressured IOs' roles in their service development processes are explored through participants'

lenses. This section finishes by summarising cooperation and collaboration amongst IOs.

7.2.1 The Policy of “One Organisation”

Delivering as One is a UN initiative first mentioned in the 60/1.2005 World Summit Outcome (Resolution A/RES/60/1 on 16 September 2005 by the UN General Assembly) and proposed by the High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence (UN General Assembly, 2006) (UN, 2005, 2006). The main objectives of this UN policy are “to increase the impact of the UN system at country level by increasing national ownership of UN activities, reducing transaction costs generated by UN organisations, and increasing the UN’s efficiency and effectiveness” (UNDG, 2009, slide 3). The purpose is to unify the UN agencies at the national level to improve their collaborative work with host countries. Vietnam is among eight countries that piloted this policy between 2007 and 2012. This policy also has been adopted by other big INGOs in this study. Participants’ raised both its beneficial and weak points. According to IOP21, her organisation has been implementing the policy ‘as one’ to improve impacts of their programs with local partner countries.

However, because this policy has only recently been adopted, there are challenges. This was pointed out by an IO participant, who stated:

Indeed, after 2008, [this organisation] joined together so it is now in transition and we have not clearly identified our strategy yet. But in my field, child protection, it remains oriented by the old four approaches. (IOP5)

He described the four strategies and approaches, which have been implemented since the early 2000s. These include: (1) conducting research and collecting information for awareness raising, (2) capacity building for practitioners, (3) working on advocacy, and (4) providing direct support to children and their families. Although they were trying to become one united organisation, he felt each member was still connected just with their own programs. Hence, there was little collaboration in program development. This raises the question of how effective this policy is to the organisation itself as well as the beneficiaries.

For LPP2, on one hand, this policy was good as it focuses on one focal point. On the other hand, he found it caused problems. He shared:

There is a difficulty that affects the progress and the timely implementation of project activities. For example, previously we only needed to discuss our concern with [this organisation] and we could always decide our work tasks, it was very fast. When it became one UN, the protocol takes more time: The UN will have to consider first, and they give feedback to [this organisation], and then it passes feedback to us. With the programs for which we have not yet reached agreement, it consumes a lot of our time. Thus the efficiency is not really better than before. (LPP2)

This view reflects the need for careful consideration of how to make a new structural policy suitable. In this case, although the change is aimed at strengthening the organisational structure at the country level to better support LPs, in fact it has made the work more difficult, particularly in administrative procedures and management.

Given there were not many comments mentioning this policy, it is anticipated that any change in an organisation's structural policy may affect its cooperation with LPs. This raises the issue of ensuring the effectiveness of newly introduced policies in the IO system.

Some participants not only mentioned this change but also talked about how IO working orientations could create changes in their mutual collaboration. This is discussed in the following section.

7.2.2 Working Orientations

The question of whether an IO should focus on advocacy or direct practice has been discussed recently in Vietnam. From the researcher's observations and participants' responses, many IOs have been shifting from providing direct work to working on the advocacy level. This shift has brought some changes in cooperation programs. One LP participant stated:

[This organisation] recently has changed its trend. They formally were involved very much in supporting communities, providing direct support for poor households and for children in special difficult circumstances. They have now changed to supporting governmental organisations in reviewing related legislation, developing social policies as well as planning strategies. (LPP8)

This is seen as moving toward sustainable development for the locality. It helps to incorporate the useful experiences and lessons learned from field practice into social policies. For LPP8, this was an appropriate change for the IO. First it reflected the move by Vietnam to low middle-income country status, and secondly, it met the needs of local technical support in macro policy development.

The same idea was shared by an IO program manager.

One concern that I think many organisations previously faced was that they were too deeply interested in direct support. They did a great job; they invested a lot of money and energy, as well as commitment for direct work, but it was like 'sewing in the dark'. When they finished, it was over, there was nothing left and their models did not multiply. Therefore, our decision is spending 50% on building models and the other 50% focusing on close cooperation with the state management agency, MOLISA, in advocacy for change. (IOP12)

This IO confirmed that this change was in line with the current movement in social development when IOs wanted to create an important change in developmental work. This view was supported by his colleague, who noted:

In the last three to four years, they [IOs] have tried to find a balance between fieldwork and advocacy. It is very difficult to have impact and change the government if we don't get their involvement through advocacy work. (IOP13)

This shows the importance of working with the local government at the macro level in order to sustain fieldwork achievements (see Section 6.4). Importantly, this benefits the local government in promoting evidence-based policy development.

However, not all of the IOs are able to work at the advocacy level; for example, one head of an IO noted:

Honestly, sometimes I feel I work from my commitment, my wish for the common good and for community benefits. Our organisation does not play an advocacy role. I felt very unfortunate because all the things we have done well and in which we have more experience, such as in alternative care, were not included in the system. We were unable to share our practical experiences at the macro level. (IOP6)

For her, despite the fact that they wanted to share their success in service delivery for advocacy work, it has been impossible to participate in advocacy, as they are a small organisation.

This section presented a changing trend in the IO working approach, which focuses on keeping a balance between the micro—providing direct services to the macro approach—policy advocacy for professionalisation at the central government level. This was considered an appropriate change in pursuing social developmental goals. Nevertheless, participants’ also asked how IOs could have a stronger voice in encouraging the government to think of strategies by which to mobilise IOs’ resources.

7.2.3 International Organisation Leadership Issue

Many comments stressed the important role of IO leaders in the design and development of service programs. Participants stressed the significance of local and professionally trained leaders in program achievement. Other management characteristics, such as working with local partners, planning, and inspiring staff were identified as key factors in leadership. An IO participant said:

We have a very good leader in child protection. Her ideas are powerful and she has a good relationship, not only with the government, but also with our organisational system. She has a good reputation, therefore, she can advocate for our program. (IOP1)

This officer further explained that because her leader was professionally trained in social work, she has capacity and the professional knowledge to make good proposals and advocate them to senior leaders. Furthermore, she was a local person so she had rich local knowledge and understanding that enabled her to successfully perform her tasks. This points to the value of hiring trained local staff to work for IOs to produce high quality programs/projects, and to initiate effective cooperation.

Speaking about fundamental leadership features, participants from another INGO also showed their appreciation of their director’ orientation. One noted:

Our director is a person who has a good and strategic vision. That is why, when our service model was organised, the initiatives for our [service users] were all very good. (IOP11)

The model that this officer mentioned was the combined vocational life skills training that the leader designed to meet the local labour market.

More importantly, another colleague added an essential leadership quality—providing collective inspiration:

The founder always keeps the entire collective team in the right direction. This is very important. (IOP10)

This helps to build organisational coherence in pursuing program success. Somewhat similar, IOP9 pointed out that the determining factor of their success was the belief that their leader infused new spirit into them.

It is not that [this organisation] has never had difficulties, it is that [organisation leader] has a great belief that we can overcome them. He has transferred his strong belief to all his employees. (IOP9)

In general, leadership is considered as one of the decisive factors in the development of service programs and the successful running of an IO. Participants' ideas suggest that IOs pay special attention to leadership issues in order to strengthen their work efficiency and to build suitable programs for their particular locality. Moreover, it appears that leadership and management capacity has a strong correlation with setting up professional relationship with LPs.

7.2.4 Bureaucracy

Bureaucracy was another area of concern acknowledged by IO participants as affecting the IO and LP cooperation programs. Comments focused on the cumbersome organisational structure and high administration costs, although, as IOP21 noted, "[bureaucracy] is unavoidable because in a big organisation you must accept it" (IOP21). However, it was recommended by both IO and LP participants, that IOs address bureaucracy to improve program effectiveness.

One IO participant, who had long-term experience in project management, touched upon the issue of cost effectiveness in administration. He said:

The administrative costs are too high to pay salaries and expenses. Indeed, they must go through different levels to pay project managers, stationery, etc. In fact, only about 50% to 60% of the total budget is spent on communities. Moreover, the budget is already very small, so it does not have great impact on the community level. (IOP5)

This illustrates the impact of high administration costs on IO programs. IOP5 explained that a lot of the budget was spent on carrying out projects' administration, especially on hiring international experts for assessment, supervision, and consultation. This is analysed in more detail in Section 7.4 of this Chapter.

The time consumed by administrative protocols was raised by an LP officer:

The administration protocols require much time and are cumbersome. [This organisation] has its own application process in recruiting consultants that is different to ours. Terms of reference have to be circulated to many sections before having the official recruitment. (LPP1)

This cumbersome process slowed down program implementation and affected cooperative programs as well as collaboration. This problem needs to be solved by setting up a common and simple administrative procedure to fit both the local and IO requirements for timely support.

In short, bureaucracy is another challenge in achieving cooperative and successful programs. To improve a program's cost and time effectiveness, participants recommended cutting down administrative expenditure and simplifying the protocols.

7.2.5 Donors' Challenges

During the discussion about difficulties, the challenges presented by donors emerged as a considerable theme amongst IO participants. They analysed the nature of how donors have had an impact on cooperative programs. Participants pointed out that donors driving their agendas were a considerable problem. One IO participant spoke out about how this influenced their programs.

Another difficulty is that in recent years, the donors' orientation for developmental projects has been changing very much. In fact, in regard to justice, there is much developmental work that still needs to be solved with donors' support. Not all the donors understand this. (IOP12)

When Vietnam received its status as a low middle-income country, support in areas that still need a lot of support, such as child care and protection, has been reduced. It seems the donors' policy, in regard to funding for mid lower income level countries automatically applied in all fields, regardless the local needs. This leads to negative impacts on the professional development of services.

In addition, the rigidity of donors' interests also counts as a difficulty for IOs in developing service programs in the most needed fields for disadvantaged children. As IOP1 argued:

Donors are usually only interested in certain issues so they set up conditions for [this organisation] to work only within these areas. They do not let us present other areas in need for support, such as children in special circumstances or issues related to HIV/AIDs. They do not do like, and do not care about those fields; they are only interested in adoption—the ‘hot issue’. (IOP1)

Because of the limited areas of interests set by donors, there is no space for IOs to propose and develop appropriate programs that meet local needs. This means that the donors’ support does not go to the places most in need. IOP1 explained:

We need money to implement other projects, but they focus on only one specific area that is not a priority. This is very difficult. If we receive money, we put ourselves under pressure to spend it because there is too much money left. (IOP1)

It is evident that donors have power over the IOs. They wish to satisfy their interests rather than to consider the best areas for their investment. Consequently, it appears that IOs are caught between donors’ interests and local needs. Notably, IOs need to be strong in advocating local needs as well as being aware of their dependency on the donors’ directives. This was stressed by IOP12, who noted:

Donors are extremely difficult. Actually, all the investments for development always have specific conditions attached. They have changed the organisation’s nature. Now we have to comply with them. I do not think that they give us money because they like us. (IOP12)

In this officer’s view, there was a high risk of being directed and changed by donors. She suggested IOs should carefully consider the conditions and requirements for funding in order to protect their vision, mission, and functioning mechanisms. This was supported by an LP participant:

Some other organisations rely heavily on the donor's purpose and mission, which greatly influence their achievements in the host country. We feel imposed upon by the donors. Sometimes it is as if they want to show their presence at those countries. (LPP8)

This comment spells out the situation of how the donors have made an impact on local IO programs. IOs themselves need to gain their self-direction in developing cooperative programs with their LPs to make their relationship productive.

IOP12 also criticised one of his donors’ working approach. He shared his past experience in working with a donor who liked the child protection field and they asked his organisation to fund a project in child care. However, because they had no concept

of developmental work, they asked his organisation to contribute in ineffective ways, which affected the quality of program negatively. This also raises the question of how to ensure an organisation's independence from the donors so as to foster fruitful cooperation with LPs. This is not easy as IOP12 indicated:

The organisation itself works to please their donors. They forget the nature of their missions. For example, our organisation's vision is about child rights and direct support. Now we have to follow the donor's orientation. So if the donor does not like working on child rights or direct support, we must stop that and do something else in their area of interest. Now there is no strategy, we follow whoever provides funding. (IOP12)

This comment describes the way in which an IO has to change to satisfy its donors to keep their financial support. They gradually lose their identity and become, instead, defined by the donors. This results in some IOs having to barter away their freedom.

Echoing the same thought, another IO participant described how donor driven issues limited program effectiveness.

Since IOs want to please donors, they do not evaluate the impacts of their preferences. In the golden period, when we did not have to care about money, we worked directly with the children to address what they need. But now the organisation must write a project proposal to meet the donors' requirements. That means INGOs have to follow the donors. (IOP5)

Thus, if this organisation has to do what the donors want, rather than assessing the local needs and helping them to meet those needs. For the same reasons, many IOs pay attention to program activities and ignore influencing change. IO programs are pressured to finish in a timely fashion and within budget without considering their effectiveness. To prevent IOs from falling into the donor driven trap they must be sustainable. Experience from a participant IO provides a good example of this.

For us, it is mainly a sponsorship policy. ... We have a very good resource generating system. (IOP14)

This IO can be quite choosy in selecting the sources that fit their vision and mission. But this is not so with many others.

Generally, donors' challenges were seen as a considerable difficulty for many IOs, especially in economic depression and changing local conditions. IOs were at high risk of being dependent on donors. Therefore, being donor driven is becoming more prevalent causing inappropriate service development for local conditions. IOs are

facing the ‘trade-off’ situation where they either keep their identity lose funding or are defined by their donors. The participants’ discussion suggested that IOs needed to be aware of building their own autonomy and stable resources.

7.2.6 International Organisation Networking and Cooperation

IOs’ cooperation and networking was a major theme identified by participants and played a crucial role in strengthening the IO and LP relations. For IO participants, internal networking and cooperation among IOs that had a prominent role in enhancing their solidarity and empowering their capacity. This helped them to have a stronger voice in supportive programs for LPs.

[This organisation] has advantages in its relationship with the government as it is in the UN system. INGOs are sometimes voiceless. Thus, the need for cooperation between IOs is crucial. (IOP13)

This was agreed by another IO:

If we cooperate, we will have powerful relationship that will make the project successful in a sustainable way. (IOP10)

For both of these participants, IO networking provided a supportive environment for IOs strengthening and to offset deficiencies. It also promoted a good opportunity for exchanging practically learned lessons, ideas, successes, and failures. It helped IOs become powerful in their advocacy work. As IOP21 asserted:

One voice is always smaller than two voices, and if we have three, four, five or more they can create a larger echo. (IOP21)

This is seen as particularly important in the newly developed child care and protection field. Nevertheless, many comments openly disclosed the weakness of IO collaboration. The following section presents how participants conceptualised IO internal cooperation, starting with the lack of networking and cooperation and then the need for an initiator and local coordinating involvement.

7.2.6.1 Lack of Networking and Cooperation

There was a convergence in agreement among IO participants about shortcomings in networking and cooperation as they felt there had not been any formal networking. Many IO participants, such as IOP6, IOP9, IOP17, IOP18, and IOP19, believed there was

very little networking between IOs and their cooperative programs with LPs. Common phrases, such as “little linkage”, “not much connection”, “not close enough” were repeated in their responses. For example, IOP18 noted:

We do not have much linkage. I know others through Internet links. Actually, there is not much networking. Even though there is an NGO website we only access it to read information. (IOP18)

Other participants shared that they mainly knew each other through personal contacts made by attending meetings or conferences. However, there was no formal relation assisting them perform better at work. One acknowledged that there was a lack of networks for sharing information, strategies, and orientations. Consequently, it was hard to have joint-programs.

IO participants were concerned about not having a formal cooperative mechanism. IO participants said their current, minimal collaboration was mostly based on personal contacts. Therefore, whether they had a good cooperation with other IOs depended on how their leaders or program managers related to other IOs. One said:

The establishment of the network relies on personal prestige. We know each other through personal relationships rather than through formal activities. Thus, IO collaboration is an issue of personal relationships, not official networking. If there is no cooperative mechanism, it is difficult for cooperation. (IOP12)

The importance of personal relations was confirmed by a staff member who noted:

I think IO cooperation depends greatly on people. When I started to work for [this organisation], we had a good relationship with SC and UNICEF. I still remember a project officer told me that if I participated in that activity, she would work with us, if not, she would not cooperate. (IOP21)

Relationships amongst IOs were rather loose and ineffective. For example, IOP13 recounted that, due to the busy schedule of the head of a child care unit in an organisation, and they could not meet regularly. This officer said that bigger IOs often did not care much about others. This raises the issue of how to instigate formal and long-term IO cooperation. Without these, it is hard to set up effective collaboration, as this officer pointed out:

There are overlaps among organisations. For example: [this organisation] spent time and money on developing training material on case management, while

[that organisation] also developed similar material. If we had talked to each other, overlaps between IOs would have not occurred. (IOP13)

This is an example of how the lack of cooperation leads to a waste of resources. For this officer, there was a need for clear program mapping to facilitate IO cooperative programs.

The lack of formal cooperation mechanisms also leads to the failure in creating an IO network. As an LP stated:

There are problems in IO cooperation. For instance, before UNICEF, [this organisation] also wanted to initiate collecting a number of organisations together; but ultimately they failed. ... Each organisation held to its own perspective. [This organisation] was told that UNICEF only had at a certain scope, and could not take leadership. Then UNICEF said that because UNICEF was a UN organisation, it would be the leader. (LPP8)

This comment reflects the need for clear rules and agreements establishing IO collaboration. One participant also stated:

So it is not worth envying each other because this organisation has more money and that organisation has little money. If they have a little money and they join us, it is very good. Obviously, if people see that there are many organisations participating in that activity, people will respect it, so we are in a win-win position. (IOP21)

This shows the value of respect between IOs regardless of how much money and technical support any one organisation can contribute. This officer also shared her discomfort when faced with the situation of an officer from a bigger IO being dominant in the joint activity because it contributed more resources than others. However, as IOP21 noted, it was necessary to appreciate other contributions because the more IOs participating in a program, the more benefits they can bring to themselves and their cooperative relationship with LPs. But currently there seems to be more competition than cooperation.

The network is weak and the question is what is the common benefit? Frankly speaking, when someone participates in a group, he/she needs to know what the benefits are, whether or not this will increase or decrease the competition of their organisations. Everyone's worried about keeping his or her own playground. (IOP6)

So organisations were afraid of sharing their resource with other. This officer confirmed that this kind of thinking was ingrained so setting up a collaborative network was very hard.

Many IO participants had a negative view of IO cooperation. Both IOP17 and IOP6 indicated that they had seen no cooperation between IOs. IOP17 said:

Actually, I have not seen cooperation. There is no link between IOs. I hope to have a working environment where organisations can cooperate together. (IOP17)

They both thought that at the moment, each organisation only built and knew about their own programs so could not take advantage of each others' strengths.

The same problem has happened within the IO system itself. This was pointed out by IOP13.

We don't know the reason for the lack of cooperation in the same working areas. For example, I only know the area that I am in charge of. (IOP13)

So even in the one organisation, people operated separately. This raises the question of how internal cooperation can be facilitated. For this participant, two teams of her organisation were sent to support programs on child protection and health, however, these two did not know about each other's projects. Ironically, they sometimes worked with the same LPs and the same client groups. This story speaks about the other weakness in the IO cooperation, and was shared as a warning for IOs to pay attention to collaboration inside their own system to improve information sharing and internal collaboration.

Participants also critically analysed the causes of problems in IO cooperation. For them, IOs failed to cooperate with each other because of their unwillingness to establish mutual collaboration. IOP6 explained why her organisation could not set up collaboration with another INGO. She said:

I knew that the [that organisation]'s programs were built on the social work approach, but they have their own direction, so often the level cooperation is relatively low. My attitude is very cooperative. ... But sometimes this is the situation: I have my way; you have your way. It therefore becomes impossible to cooperate. (IOP6)

In her story, it appears that there is no real effort in establishing collaboration in practice. This was detailed in IOP7's comments:

There aren't any meetings introducing their organisations. Sometimes they only know about each other through the media. (IOP7)

Consequently, the cooperation between IOs in the development of professional services is very limited.

This section has presented the participants' views on the lack of networking and cooperation between and within IOs. They noted an unreadiness for collaboration. It is important to note the importance of IO cooperation and collaboration in developing coherence, unity and, particularly, in calling for a collective power in advocacy and direct practice with LPs. The difficulties and challenges resulting from the lack of cooperation have clearly demonstrated the need for improving the exchange of activities between IOs and within IOs' systems.

7.2.6.2 The Need for a Local Coordinator

During the discussion about IO networking, participants showed their expectations of mutual and supportive cooperation. In order to build an effective IO network, they stressed the role of an initiator who should take the lead in coordinating IO networking. Although there is an INGO network called NGO Resource Centre, the five participant IOs did not mention it. Both IO and LP participants did speak of the necessity of having a local coordinator to help IOs facilitate relationship and cooperation. One LP participant thought:

The role of the governmental agency is extremely important in establishing IO cooperation in child care and protection. Particularly, it is the job of the Child Care and Protection Department to network these IOs together. If there is no moderator, such as a Vietnamese governmental organisation, each IO will follow its own objectives, goals, and different operating activities. (LPP10)

This officer shared her organisation's successful experience as a focal point in maintaining the relationship among IOs and between IOs and local communities in their area. She said that with a moderator, the government could manage IO programs as well as avoid their duplication. IOP11 agreed that a local coordinator enabled the sharing and exchange of information and practical experiences.

Sharing the same thought, another stated:

The coordination responsibility should be the Vietnamese government's. I am thinking of a government unit that is mandated to do the mapping work of IO programs. However, at the moment, there is no such organisation at the central governmental level. (IOP13)

This officer argued that an assigned central governmental agency would be the best organisation to be in charge of regulating IO cooperation in order to provide suitable services in different locations.

Generally, IO and LP participants suggested assigning a local organisation, at the central level, to be responsible for coordinating and regulating the cooperation between IOs and LPs. This is a relevant solution for linking IOs together as well to manage the IO supportive programs effectively.

In short, Section 7.2 has discussed the issues and problems that can have great impacts on IO and LP cooperative relationship. Participants' comments emphasised IO issues related to their organisational structures and mechanisms that affected this mutual relationship. They were: the change in organisational policy called Delivering as One (see Section 7.2.1), their work orientation moving from a micro to a macro level of practice, complications of bureaucracy, donor challenges, and IO networking and cooperation. These factors created challenges to the development of IO service programs for vulnerable children and families. Therefore, both IOs and LPs should take into account these difficulties in order to build cooperation.

7.3 International Organisation and Local Partner Cooperation

Having examined the relationship between the IOs, the discussion now turns to the important matter of the relationship between the IOs and LPs. IO and LP cooperation concept was operationalised in balancing the relationship between IOs and LPs, LP and IO factors in building collaboration, and other challenges affecting the cooperation.

In the participants' opinion, the relationship between IOs and LPs was the premise for the success of their programs. IOP1 stressed:

The IO and LP relationship is very important. If it is not good this very much affects project implementation. (IOP1)

Many other participants confirmed the need for a harmonious mutual relationship. For example, an LP community practitioner noted:

I think the LP role in the relationship is the decisive factor for program's success, because they are the direct project implementers. (LPP14)

LPP14 highlights the importance of building good implementation cooperation with LPs in communities. Indeed, in order to build an unshakeable affiliation, adequate attention should be paid to how to get active involvement from both the IOs and LPs.

The following comment from an IO child protection officer shows how effective the cooperative program is if a good IO and LP tie is maintained.

According to my observations and understanding, cooperation with MOLISA is essential in the development of a network between this and other organisations in the child care and protection field. (IOP15)

Thanks to open exchange and discussion, the IOs in this network established productive cooperation, and they all appreciated this relationship. Holding the same attitude, IOP12 shared that having a good relationship with a provincial organisation had helped them to address the issue of child abuse.

Besides the above positive feedback on this mutual relationship, participants shared their standpoint on how to develop an equal relationship. This topic is discussed next.

7.3.1 Equal Relationship between International Organisations and Local Partners

Maintaining equality in the relationship between IOs and LPs was considered a key aspect of mutual cooperation in the development of service programs. According to participants, this related to the issue of IO perceptions about the power of sponsorship and LP involvement.

7.3.1.1 International Organisation Perception about the Power of Sponsors

Interestingly, the question of power and control was mentioned by six LP officers and three IO staff. Most LP participants showed their concern about the way in which sponsorship power was normally used to control LPs. Three LP participants were concerned about decision-making and budgets. As one explained:

Up to now, the majority follow the decisions made by those who have the money; they will control activities. So in my view, the implementation of cooperative activities often must follow the international partners' directives. IOs initiate activities, provide orientations, and ask LPs to carry them out. (LPP7)

This participant was concerned about how to meet the objectives of both local and international partners equally. Other two participants also warned both IOs and LPs to avoid falling into the trap of LP compromise. While LPP13 thought that IO officers needed to give authority to locals so that they could use IO support effectively for the benefits of the Vietnamese, the other provided a different scenario. He noted:

I think it is quite easy to get compromises from local authorities, as long as they get the project. Thus, the discussion on the initial cooperative framework is very important. It is important to remind the local partners about this. Many times, I myself have witnessed situations in which LPs always agreed with what IOs wanted. Consequently, when it came to implementation, they were faced with drawbacks. (LPP7)

This officer was referring to things like activities that did not suit local conditions and needs. As a result, it took a long time to adjust the program but even then some programs had to stop mid way. He gave two reasons for this. The first was the lack of knowledge and understanding from LPs that made them blindly follow their IO counterparts. This was because they did not have the capacity to understand what was most suitable for their localities. The second was the local fear of losing IO invested money if they argued against IO schemes. The same explanation was made by a different LP participant who was working in a ministerial department. She stated:

I think the person who has money, has the most powerful voice. Many times I had a feeling of IOs dominating their provincial LPs during my field trips. It might be because the locals did not have many resources so they wanted IOs to come and support their work. Moreover, with our oriental thinking, we often are a bit humble. (LPP10)

This officer said that at the higher level, such as a ministry, her organisations' voices had been raised against IOs' control. Her organisation was clear that while they welcomed IO support, they would not accept any oppression or control of LPs. This raises the question of how to help LPs realise their role and express their power in IO and LP cooperation.

Another LP raised a key point in regarding relationship equality.

Equality occurs when both sides listen to each other and agreement must be reached before any related decision is made. It may be the case that they are not very satisfied in any proposed activity or with the budget or procedure requirements, but when both sides can sit and discuss their dissatisfaction openly, collaboration can occur. (LPP9)

This recognises the importance of showing respect for and goodwill towards each other. Open and straightforward discussions at every stage of cooperation are seen as vital for setting up a strong relationship.

IO participants shared similar attitudes towards the way in which some IOs used their sponsorship power. An IO officer stated:

In some cases, INGOs provide what they have and they drive the roles of LPs because LPs have a shortage of resources and do not have professional knowledge. Obviously, LPs in those situations will have to depend on those that have power. (IOP6)

This highlights the disadvantaged position of some LPs in their relationship with IOs. Thus, it is necessary to reconceive the way some INGOs use their power.

Three other IOs provided their ideas on how to keep a balance between power and control. One shared her experience:

I often remind our staff and even [this organisation]'s partners that we are with LPs rather than the sponsors. We are beside them to make the job better. We are not in the position of giving orders, asking LPs to do A, B, or C. (IOP21)

Both IOs and LPs need to take responsibility for building cooperation. It confirms the principle of self-awareness. That was why IOP19 noted:

I think both sides need to make an equal effort, not just one side telling the other what to do. Both sides need to contribute 50 - 50. (IOP19)

Creating an equal relationship requires equal participation and involvement. However, it should be noted that there is no exact formula for an equal relationship. Each partner needs to be aware of their and the others' strengths and weaknesses, as well as available resources, in order to establish fruitful cooperation.

This section has presented LP and IO participants' comments on the tendency of some sponsors to abuse their power and to control their LP counterparts. It suggests that IOs should always be aware of being 'with' rather than dominating their LPs.

The next section looks at how to build an equal relationship through the process of transferring roles to LPs.

7.3.1.2 Transferring Roles to Local Partners

For many participants, an equal relationship meant developing a good strategy for transferring roles to LPs managing IO programs. Most of the comments stressed the process of helping LPs master service program development. As Wilson and Farkas (2014) conclude:

The shared decision-making paradigm has also ceded responsibility to agencies and service practitioners in ways that strengthen their ability to provide high quality social services and to facilitate the uptake of a complex service model in a relatively short period of time. (p. 191)

Thus, many participants' discussions turned on the ratio of LP and IO participation in cooperative activities. There appeared to be agreement on greater LP involvement in the development and implementation of IO programs. LPP8 and LPP9 confirmed the larger role of their organisation in the service program—the CHL. They controlled up to 70% of the work, which helped them gain an equal position with their IO partner. The following was a suggestion from a director of a SWSC.

For me, the ratio of engagement in IO programs between LPs and IOs should be 7/3 respectively. We have people and resources. We are not dependent. The IO project should not interfere with us too deeply because the centre's activities are not the program officer's tasks. (LPP13)

So support from IOs was just a catalyst for promoting local service program for vulnerable children. The LPs needed to take the lead in using this support effectively. This viewpoint was strongly echoed by a direct practitioner. She said that IOs were involved in supporting LPs financially and technically, based on their capacity. She noted that the "whole project implementation was carried out by the local staff and volunteers" (LPP14). If IOs do not consult or give the full implementing role to the LPs, the program will fail. Therefore another question for IOs and particularly LPs, to address is how to utilise IO support to appropriately help local people.

IO counterparts indicated their agreement with LP officers that greater LP involvement resulted in better cooperation. For example, IOP4 said that in many activities, 90% of the activities were undertaken by their LPs. However, she believed

that the transferring process should be conducted gradually, in accordance with the increasing level of LP capacity. As a head of a child protection unit stated:

At the first stage we have to be involved in jointly orienting the programs. Then, gradually, when the LP capacity is strengthened, we will withdraw. We often say that initially, we do all the work, then after that we do half of the work and the LP does the other half. Later we withdraw and the LP takes over. (IOP21)

This officer confirmed that how much LPs were involved and active depended on their mastery of professional knowledge, skills, and program management. This requires LPs to think about their own capacity building strategies.

Another IO participant clarified how his organisation avoided being too involved in programs.

[This organisation]'s opinion is that we do not intervene too deeply. We only interfere when LPs diverge from the orientation. If an incident occurs in the program, our staff help them see how it can be solved. (IOP12)

IOs need to know how to give the LPs a sense of initiative in the program. Nonetheless, it is still not clear what the appropriate orientation is. It needs to be discussed and agreed upon by both sides in order to reach a decision acceptable to both sides.

Generally, two interesting topics were discussed in this section in regard to the concept of equal relationship between IOs and LPs. In this sense, there appeared to be a wide agreement between IO and LP participants in how to use the power of sponsors appropriately. Participants clearly identified the risk of being over-controlled by IOs. The key answer to the problem of domination that participants suggested was keeping to the principles of respect, participation, self-awareness, and common goal attainment. In addition, LPs' activeness in taking a decisive role in cooperative programs was discussed throughout by both LP and IO officers. Participants' comments confirmed the bigger the role of LPs in program, the better cooperation and project achievement attained. Nevertheless, there is no perfect formula for IO and LP cooperation. It depends on the IOs' readiness and LPs' competence to facilitate an equal relationship. Moreover, both IOs and LPs should be self-reflective their roles and responsibilities in this cooperative development process.

Participants mentioned other influential factors, which can affect IO and LP cooperation and these are examined next.

7.3.2 Other Factors Influencing International Organisation and Local Partner Cooperation

In addition to above mentioned factors, participants highlighted other issues that have impacts on the development of IO and LP cooperation, consisting of: finding a common language, influencing factors from LPs, and from IOs. These factors are analysed in this section.

7.3.2.1 Finding Common Language

Many participants stressed on having a common language in building a close IO and LP bond. This concept includes terms used in understanding each other, especially local people and conditions as well as the way in which both IOs and LPs behave in setting up mutual cooperation. As an LP officer from a DOLISA who held a social work bachelor degree noted:

The most important thing is to find a common 'language' between IOs and Vietnamese organisations. It is important to know local people as well as to know yourselves. This is because sometimes the staff from IOs come to Vietnam with little understanding about it. Furthermore, they showed what they could do in Africa and copied it in Vietnam. However, it is different here. Our tradition is different. Thus, they have to view the work from a different aspect. (LPP4)

This LP pointed to the significance of having a common understanding amongst each partner in the relationship. He also spoke about the local people's fear of international people and organisations, particularly at the communal level. Both IOs and LPs strive for a common development goal, consequently, they should have the same attitude towards cooperative programs. The social work principle of putting yourself in the other's shoes is applicable in this context. This idea was supported by IOP12. He shared his practical experience of a successful service program in which they found a common language by changing the IO's approach to local communities.

One LP participant pointed to the need for LPs to understand their IO counterparts. She stated:

We also need to understand each IO because it has its own mandate. For example, this organisation only supports technical issues and policies. They do not provide direct support, whereas the locals want them to give direct support. It is not so relevant. (LPP11)

In this case, the problem occurred when both sides did not understand each other. In her opinion, although both parties had their own regulations it was crucial that each should respect the other and find a common way of addressing their differences. To address this issue, LPP9 suggested that IOs and LPs needed to have regular exchanges in both general and private working sessions and that cooperation needed to be based on local needs.

LPP8 spoke about the way in which a common language could be set up via openness and transparency.

If we want to work together, publicity and transparency are important factors. We all want to know what each of us is doing, so that we can help each other. (LPP8)

For this LP leader, there were working principles that should be employed if IOs and LPs wanted to set up a common ground for supporting disadvantaged children. Another IO participant acknowledged that it was normal to have conflicts.

In my opinion, we need to get agreements between local authorities and IOs to carry out our activities. There are discrepancies in our work. The local authorities might prefer one specific way to carry out an activity as they think it is appropriate to the locality while the organisation expects to implement it another way. (LPP7)

Harmonising differing opinions played an important role in balancing the mutual relationship.

This section has presented participants' discussions about how important it was to have a common language in understanding the local context, knowing the partner's strengths and weakness, respecting openness for cooperation and each other's working culture in constructing fruitful relationship.

Participants identified other factors for both LPs and IOs to consider for a purposeful cooperation and these will now be discussed.

7.3.2.2 Factors from Local Partners

As was previously mentioned, good cooperation needs to be built by the active involvement of both IOs and LPs. Two important factors were highlighted by participants: LP commitment and willingness and LPs actively approaching IOs to express their needs.

First, IO participants indicated their appreciation of LPs' commitment toward their programs. As an IO project staff member said:

I can expect a fruitful collaboration with the Women's Association officials, as they are enthusiastic and committed. (IOP18)

It is understandable that the communities with a high commitment to improving their children's lives will attract IOs, as they make an initial strong impression.

Second, most of the IO participants expected LPs to have an active approach towards raising their need for cooperative programs. There appeared no difference between IO and LP participants on this issue. As a foreign officer said:

One SPC approached an IO donor and they were able to get a little bit of funding to set up respite day care after they heard UNICEF speak at a national conference. There will be more in the future. So it is sort of laying foundations for a lot of joint-work. (IOP3)

Participants also pointed out the consequences of LP passiveness. For example, according to IOP6, this leads to stagnancy. She contended:

The problem happens when LPs are relatively inactive. They need to be active so that they can speak out their needs. If not, how can they actively drive INGOs to meet their needs and play important roles in coordinating INGO services. (IOP6)

Moreover, the activeness of LPs helps them avoid being disadvantaged in the collaboration. LPP9 said:

If our activeness is not high, we cannot do it. IOs will come and talk about their interests in this field or that field. So what are we doing? If we are imposed upon by IOs, minimal benefits will result. (LPP9)

This participant was also concerned about the LP's taking the initiative in all collaborative activities.

The discussion of participants in this section focused on two main concerns, which were LP enthusiasm, commitment, and activeness. For IO participants, without LP dedication and willingness, cooperation could not be carried out successfully. However, cooperation needs to have the other side's participation, therefore, IOs are equally important.

7.3.2.3 Factors from International Organisations

Participants highlighted IO factors that contributed to IO and LP cooperation. These were identical with the above mentioned LP factors, which were: (i) the IO officers' openness, enthusiasm, and commitment, and (ii) IOs playing an active support role. In addition to this, one more noticeable factor identified was the IOs' flexibility in making adjustments.

First, openness was understood by how willing an IO was to share their information with LPs and the way in which an IO cooperated. LPP5's response suggested having adequate IO partner information from the very beginning of their collaboration was necessary for building trust. However, trust becomes difficult when the IO is based in a nation with different cultural and political ideologies. She explained:

Because [this organisation] is located very far away from Vietnam in the USA, we wondered whether our cooperation would feel secure? It was true that at the beginning we were concerned about security. Therefore, it is good to be open with us so we could build the cooperation quickly and effectively. (LPP5)

This participant's comment reflects the need to be informed about IOs, including their mission, vision, and organisational structure. This was important in the first phase of cooperation as if the IOs are open about their aims, trust can be built.

Sharing how IOs' altruism could contribute to setting up a fruitful rapport, LPP1 said:

In general, IOs and [this organisation] show their goodwill in cooperating on the basis of work. Thus, discussions for cooperation are conducted easily; agreement is attained quickly; and there is a lot of understanding and sharing. (LPP1)

This officer stated the cooperation with his IO partner was built on their common child rights and the best interest of the child commitment. For him any conflict could be

solved as long as IOs were open. The trust was built gradually with the both sides' efforts for cooperation.

LP participants also valued devotion to work. LPP5 and LPP6 expressed their appreciation towards IO officers' commitment with one stating:

The IO project officers are very enthusiastic. They work without lunch and just pay attention to work. They are very committed. ... They have shown that they bring good opportunities for our community. (LPP6)

Working in a community Women's Association for more than 15 years, this community collaborator shared that it was the first time their community received IO support and it especially impressed her as she had a chance to work with professional IO staff.

Second, LPs commented that IO activeness was central in developing cooperative programs. Like the comments presented in the previous section about the necessity of LP activeness, LPP9 stated:

In general, our IO partner is very active, from recognising the strengths and weaknesses, proposing solutions to addressing problems and providing contacts to get international experience. We appreciate it very much. (LPP9)

In his opinion, there would be no successful service programs unless both LPs and IOs were active and participated in each stage of the collaboration.

Third, IO flexibility in making appropriate adjustments was raised. One IO officer shared:

Some IOs are relatively flexible and that creates favourable conditions for national partners and for relevant adjustments to be made. As a result, the programs are run effectively. (IOP8)

In a similar vein, the LP counterpart provided an illustration of the flexibility from an IO which had contributed to his program's progress on the CHL. He noted:

When we are working with IO officers on program's activities, they are very flexible in the adjusting the operation, content, even a bit on the target clients. (LPP8)

It can be seen that flexibility is a crucial element in building a long term and productive relationship.

To summarise, influencing IO factors have been viewed as equally important as the LP ones. LP participants emphasised the fundamental contribution of IO officers'

openness, dedication, and active support. LP officers expressed their special appreciation of the IO cooperative spirit. Significantly, two participants raised the issue of flexibility in adjusting to LPs.

Other challenges were mentioned in regard to developing a mutual relationship and these are presented in the following section.

7.3.3 International and National Differences

This section presents the international and national differences. These challenges were mentioned by participants concerned political perceptions, the application of child rights, and working styles and approaches.

First, the issue of political differences was raised by IOP6, a head of an INGO. She tried to compare the governments of Vietnam and the USA where her headquarters is located, in regard to their political systems and bureaucracies as well as considering how much any government should be involved in social services. She thought that the Vietnamese central government was engaged in everything, from service delivery to policy development. Thus, there was not much space for other stakeholders, such as the non-governmental sector, or civil societies to participate. Instead of controlling everything, the local government should focus more on management and regulation. In contrast, the USA government played a smaller role and this encouraged the involvement of other sectors. For this IO participant, it was hard for IOs to extend their program through local NGOs and this limited their cooperation with other local organisations. This is only one participant's comment, and it is based on her personal perspective and understanding.

Second, the differences in child rights' applications were received many comments. Different understandings of child rights and how to apply them to the local context are an increasingly concerning issues. An IO noted:

When we are cooperating with LPs, how to say it, our organisation is a rights-based one. That means that everything carried out must be based on rights. This is new to LPs. It is difficult as LPs think that 'rights' are related to something very political. These are sensitive areas we are not allowed to broach. (IOP21)

Even though equal rights are strongly emphasised in the Vietnamese Proclamation of Independence in this field, this IO officer found that there were gaps in awareness about child rights, particularly the right to participation. From her experiences, there were projects that spent much money on promoting the right to participation; however, they easily became 'formalistic' or 'superficial', as the idea of child rights has not yet been absorbed into people's actual lives.

Four other IO participants shared a similar sentiment. One of the reasons for this was thought to be that people's consciousness adheres to the Confucian patriarchal tradition. This was an obstacle for the development of many service programs for children. For example, one IO stated:

Vietnam is a Confucian society. People still think that a child needs to obey adults in our culture. Thus, the right to participation is limited because people believe that it's not what is said in our tradition. (IOP4)

This reflects the difficulties of the application of child rights in a place where the local perception is heavily affected by the old way of thinking.

To explore this problem, the researcher raised child rights with both the IO and LP officers. There was a contrast in the findings. While the main reason identified by IO officers was the gap in local awareness and understanding about the CRC, the answer from LP counterparts was the difficulty in the application of an international standard to a national culture and conditions. For example, an LP participant contended:

I want to remind that our cultural understanding of rights is different. I attended a global conference on the Elimination of the Worse Forms of Child Labour. A presenter from Northern Europe provided pictures of Vietnamese children in an orphanage cleaning and sweeping the rooms and playing yard and claimed they presented child labour exploitation. However, in our country, labour is a way of educating and enhancing children's cognitive processes. Of course, there should be a balance between education, recreation, and labour in accordance with children's capacity. (LPP8)

This officer appreciated the Vietnamese legal system which regulated children's rights as well as their duties to their families and communities. Children were informed about what they should do to contribute to their families and communities. Conversely, he criticised the way in which some Western societies focused too much on rights but not on responsibilities. He added:

Our law emphasises children's obligations, and stressed ethical responsibilities. Hence, emphasis is put on both rights and obligations. Some Western societies look too much on the rights but not at obligations. If we follow that direction, it is also dangerous for the children, families, and society. (LPP8)

This story is a good example of the difficulty in accurately understanding and applying children's rights in a local context. As previously mentioned in Chapter 1, Vietnam was the first country in Asia and second in the world to ratify the CRC. Rather than question Vietnam's goodwill towards child rights, the question is how to make an international convention relevant to the local context.

Another LP officer supported his colleague's ideas on how to apply CRC appropriately into the local conditions. He used an example disciplining children in a SPC where he thought they needed to have some kind of detention and punishment for children who were very stubborn and often ran away. He argued:

It is necessary to have appropriate disciplinary methods to ensure they realise their inappropriate behaviours. In addition, it helps them become mature human beings for the betterment of society. (LPP2)

This comment manifests the different perception of CRC application under Vietnamese conditions. For this officer, there needed to be flexibility to fashion practical approaches suitable for local children. This notion will be further investigated in Chapter 9.

Another explanation was given by LPP10 who stressed:

The 'culture' of each nation is different. We think simply that if our child is bad, we force the child to lie down and take the feather duster to smack him/her on the bottom. By doing that, we are educating the child. Our older people often say 'spare the rod, spoil the child'. Within the oriental perception educating children must be like that. So that is one difference between overseas and Vietnamese culture. (LPP10)

Whether this is a reasonable explanation for using corporal punishment on children is a controversial topic. But it should not be avoided. How IOs and LPs can overcome their difference in values in order to mount joint programs for children and the vulnerable needs to be addressed.

One more area of difference identified was related to working styles and the different approaches of IO and LP officers. As one IO officer stated, "the difficulty is that each side has a different working style" (IOP21). IOP1 agreed.

With the Vietnamese people, they work like family members, happy and relaxed. But for overseas IO staff, they are very serious. It is their working culture. This causes conflicts at work. (IOP1)

How to adapt and respect each other's working culture in order to meet the objectives of the project plays an important role in IO and LP relationship. Finding a common voice in addressing this issue is a very important aspect of a successful cooperation.

Working in a direct service providing organisation IOP17 shared their obstacles due to the different approaches in managing and operating programs.

This is the barrier: their [LPs] working principle is first to sign an agreement, and wait for approval from the Committee. Then an official letter is proposed to local communities. After that the local community makes a list of clients in crisis who need immediate support. This means this process is very slow. (IOP17)

This slow process has caused this officer much stress. She said that she could not stand the time this consumed and the passive work from LP officers. Indeed, when the organisation finally received the local referral, many of the cases of vulnerable children and families were no longer in crisis situation to get program support. Timely support could prevent the risk of abandonment of the children or sending them to orphanages. The same complaint was made by two other IO colleagues. IOP6 noted:

Actually, the main one [difficulty] is the approach: We need to approach clients in a timely manner and select appropriate clients. (IOP6)

Her organisation used to work through the local LISA, but because of the slow processing protocols, they had to change their LPs.

Another participant shared a different complaint.

As head of the department of training, I have to report to DOLISA monthly and quarterly. Sometimes I feel it is very difficult to write them a report. Although I have done very well, they keep requiring me to rewrite my report according to their format and requirements. (IOP9)

Also speculating on this topic, a foreign IO officer seemed unhappy with the lack of decisive action from her local counterparts. She noted:

Ah, the challenges, I often feel that. I sometimes feel, maybe, a little bit constrained by the [LPs'] attachment to directives coming from the government; that people are not so willing to test something out unless it comes from the top. (IOP3)

It was thought that some programs were delayed because the local people did not take action. They waited until they received instructions from higher management. The differences in working method slow down not only the speed of operating projects, but also the process of service delivery to vulnerable children and families.

In short, participants have showed their concern about international and national differences in some cooperative aspects. The three areas of discrepancies exposed were: political ideological perceptions, child rights applications, and working styles and approaches. Comments from the majority of participants provided a chance to hear a more critical viewpoint on how to build a mutual relationship via harmonising conflicts arising from different perceptions and cultures.

In summary, Section 7.3 of this chapter has listed the decisive and complex issues and challenges in IOs and LP cooperative relationship. It described the issues associated with building an equal relationship, such as the perception of using sponsorship power and control over the LPs, the influencing factors and other challenges that greatly impacted bilateral cooperation. First, participants stressed the importance of how to recognise the appropriate use of IO power and control to ensure equal participation in all the cooperative programs. Fundamental social work principles, such as 'respect', 'self-awareness' and 'self-reflection', and 'equal participation' have been recommended to keep cooperation strong. In addition, it was necessary to be aware of encouraging LPs to play larger roles in every stage of the collaborative process. Second, three topics were analysed to demonstrate influencing factors. It was valuable to note the factor of finding a common language or understanding. For both IOs and LPs, having a common understanding, working principles, and mutual interests are equally essential for productive collaboration. Other factors also affected the relationship. The working attitude was important: commitment, willingness, and goodwill from both LP and IO officers were commented on as contributing factors for a harmonious and trusted alliance. Even more important was IO flexibility in adjusting to local conditions. International and national differences in cross-cultural environment and the inconsistency between LPs were also noted. Generally, there is a need for openness, understanding, and acceptance of the

strengths and weaknesses of each side in order to build long-term and effective cooperation.

7.4 International Expert Issues

This last part of the chapter describes the international expert issues in regard to how they are related to the development of cooperative programs. It is presented in a separate section since there were many ideas and comments from both IO and LPs regarding the way in which the LPs could take advantage of them as well as in what way international experts affected the development of appropriate service programs.

7.4.1 International Experts' Contribution

As was mentioned in Chapter 4, the presence of international experts and consultants has contributed to social work professionalisation in Vietnam. It is particularly important since social work has been newly developed and there is a shortage of human resources. As one IO participant pointed out:

For a long time, mostly, we have had to ask for support from international experts because the models, which we introduced to Vietnam, are new and we have no experience of them. (IOP2)

Therefore, international experts are seen as a valuable resource to fill the gap of the local professional workforce, particularly for technical support.

LP officers stressed that they learned from the professional experience of an Australian expert (LPP2, LPP8), the professional working approach that an international expert demonstrated (LPP1, LPP8, LPP11), and logical thinking and problem analysis (LPP11). For example, LPP2 said:

We think that international experts have a lot of international experience and, especially, their policies are ahead compared to those in Vietnam. So we appreciate their experience, consultations, and comments. (LPP2)

Besides the benefits that international experts have brought in their support of their Vietnamese partners, participants were also concerned about how to make international experts' consultations appropriate for local conditions. The following section will focus on discussing challenges of this issue.

7.4.2 Challenges

The most concerned comments focus on the analysis of differences between international experts' backgrounds and conditions, and their awareness, expectations, and knowledge that cause challenges for IOs and LPs attaining their desired cooperative objectives.

The first mentioned challenge is the different backgrounds and living conditions. One IO officer acknowledged this weakness.

Actually, the majority of invited social work international experts come from developed countries; thus, they are from very different contexts than Vietnam. The sharing of knowledge and experience is conducted in a theoretical manner. There are difficulties in application in a different social environment. (IOP5)

Different backgrounds can limit the overseas professionals in their provision of practical applicable experience. IOP5 suggested that IOs should have a long-term strategic investment with the international professional workforce. What this meant was paying for international experts to spend time in the local context to attain their own practical experiences so that they could provide professional input relevant to the locality. This appears impossible for many IOs due to budget constraints. The problem is how to combine good theoretical knowledge from international personnel with the local practical experience to make service programs suitable, and yet, at the same time save money.

IOP2 also noted that international experts faced difficulties in understanding the local welfare since the "Vietnamese welfare system is different from those in advanced countries" (IOP2). She continued to speak of another difficulty: finding relevant personnel. She added that her organisation wanted to find someone who knew about the local situation; however, this was very difficult. She said:

There are some [international experts] that we feel have not achieved as much as we expected. For example, recently in their research on a system of social welfare services in Vietnam, the expert team came up with a very general picture. What we want them to do is to point out what are the shortcomings that need to change and make very specific recommendations. (IOP2)

An IO section chief shared her thoughts about this:

When we bring international experts to Vietnam, I think what is the most difficulty for them is their lack of knowing what is happening in local communities. Although, they have a lot of experience abroad, they can only provide general recommendations, totally general. However, concretising those into guidelines, legal systems, and social policies is not easy. (IOP4)

She further elaborated that Vietnam was a highly structured nation where power was not centralised in one place but was throughout many systems, such as the Communist Party system, the Government system, and the Parliamentary system (see Section 1.3.3). For example, international experts need to learn about the separate but linked functions of the Peoples' Committees and the mass organisations, and so on. This has made it difficult for them particularly in policy development.

This problem is exacerbated by international experts spending only a few weeks or months in Vietnam. Thus, IOs and LPs should redefine their expectations of international experts. IOP4 suggested an initiative.

To make the recommendations of the international experts effective requires qualified Vietnamese people who have the capacity to assess and provide solutions and policies that meet general recommendations. International experts cannot do this by themselves. (IOP4)

A foreign IO officer who has been in Vietnam for almost 10 months, agreed:

Policy frameworks are quite different here from other places where I have worked. ... It just takes time to understand and to appreciate those differences. (IOP3)

She advised that it was better to have some kind of orientation and spend time studying local conditions and contexts. And the key point was that overseas experts should respect what was happening locally.

LP participants' perspectives were no different. LPP1 said:

The two environments are totally different. For example, in regard to the way of seeing a child in institutional care, according to the foreign idea, children should be transferred to communities, but if there is no person in the community to take care of the child, he/she will die. So it is still better to raise the child in the SPC, though it is not really a perfect environment. (LPP1)

This participant explained that the local conditions were not as good as in the international experts' country. The local child care system, particularly at the community level has not yet been formed and a step by step de-institutionalisation plan is required.

Because of the differences in background, knowledge, and experiences, many international experts advised higher standards than were possible in Vietnam currently. One IO said:

It is difficult that they often compare the local model with the international standard in developed countries, and sometimes they provide recommendations which are inappropriate to the locals' reality. (IOP2)

This raises the question of how to carefully consider international experts' suggestions. This is particularly important at the lower level where these LPs, as mentioned, are not strong enough to refuse if those suggestions are not relevant for their local communities.

This is also happened with IOP1. This officer noted:

The Vietnamese said that this was too advanced for them, but the international expert responded that they should do it like this, as it was the right way to do it. This put them under pressure, because the Vietnamese know that what the person said was what they should do; however, in local context they cannot do it. (IOP1)

This participant said that she went on a field visit to a SPC with two consultants, one was a local and the other was from Australia. Each of them assessed the situation differently. While the local person thought that it was appropriate to keep a child with epilepsy in a locked cage for his protection, the Australian was very angry and saw it as treating the child like criminal and as a human rights violation. But the current conditions of the centre, where there were not enough staff and an unsecured environment, if the child was outside without close supervision he could die. Thus, it was very challenging for LPs to meet the child' needs as well as ensure he was protected from any danger. Continuing on this topic, IOP4 noted:

I am also concerned about international experts. I told them to please make their recommendations 'doable' and understand that the procedure has to process step by step. (IOP4)

In her opinion, providing feasible recommendations that were based on the available resources was essential in helping IOs and LPs in the development of their collaborative programs.

International experts' inflexibility, the language barrier, and their high cost were also raised. Relating to their rigid behaviour, an LP officer commented:

With international experts, there are some cases when they listen very carefully. But there are also cases when they are very rigid and refuse to change their views. (LPP1)

Two participants pointed out the language barrier that reduced program effectiveness. LPP5 said:

I think it is very difficult to communicate with the foreigners. If only foreigners work on the program, to be honest, I dare not implement it as if we do not understand each other, how can we cooperate? (LPP5)

This comment shows the LP's worry about how to have effective communication during cooperation so that they could meet the desired objectives. This was also true in the case experienced by IOP1.

LPs cannot understand many international experts. The LPs then said that the foreign experts were keeping their distance so they were difficult to work with. (IOP1)

One more challenge, identified by two IO officers, was the high cost of hiring international experts. Whilst IOP8 shared her previous experience of working on an IO program in which they had to spend much of the budget on hiring international experts based on the LP's request. IOP5 criticised some INGOs for spending their budget on international experts, saying:

There are activities that Vietnamese can do but some INGOs still use foreigners, thus causing wastage of the program budget. Some people have the 'disease of believing in foreigners' expertise much more than that of locals. (IOP5)

This officer added that also, due to budget limits, some of their programs had to use international volunteers. But this appeared to be ineffective because the internationals lacked commitment and often their tasks were left unfinished.

This section has discussed issues and challenges of international experts. It focused on an analysis of how the differences in background, knowledge, and practical experience can affect the IOs and LPs building appropriate cooperative programs. There was a need to know how to use this valuable resource considering the professional resource shortage in Vietnam. Some solutions for helping international experts gain local knowledge and experience to provide applicable recommendations were made. Importantly, the issue of using program budgets effectively in calling for

international technical support reminded IOs to pay attention to cost and effectiveness.

7.5 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the relationship between IOs and LPs has been examined under three themes. First, the participants highlighted points in IO structures and mechanisms that influenced IO and LP cooperation, which included the policy of Delivering as One, the change in working approach toward policy advocacy, leadership issues, donors' challenges, and IO networking and internal cooperation. This section raised the need for careful consideration of any structural changes that would create difficulties in carrying out collaborative programs for local disadvantaged children. Moreover, it portrayed the IO challenges in their own systems that LPs needed to understand so that, together, IOs and LPs could overcome these obstacles. It also suggested a strategy of employing trained professionals in management positions in IO social work programs in order to support LPs effectively. It was also necessary for IOs to take into account how to improve their networking and internal cooperation in order to fully mobilise their strengths. In order to do this, participants confirmed the coordinating role of LPs.

Second, participants' responses emphasised the need for building an equal relationship between IOs and LPs. They critically commented on perceptions about power and control from the sponsorship side. They recommended working 'with' LPs and playing the role of subordinators and catalysts in supporting LPs. Notably, they mentioned the necessity of having a common language and two way communication in solving differences and conflicts, particularly those attached to cultures, working styles and approaches. Additionally, IO and LP cooperative relationship should be built and nurtured in an environment where fundamental professional principles of equality, respect, participation, and the pursuit of the common interests for locals existed and were maintained. Also, it was important to have openness and a shared understanding and acceptance of each other's strengths and weaknesses.

Finally, the issue of international experts was discussed, particularly the way in which IOs and LPs should develop strategies for utilising this highly professional work

force. Participants spoke of challenges in the differences between international experts' backgrounds, knowledge, and experiences and how to minimise these barriers in IO programs. It was seen as necessary to consider the relevance and appropriateness of overseas professional advice for the local conditions and context to improve IOs' and LPs' effectiveness.

The following chapter will take up the importance of adapting and creating programs that are truly relevant to the local context, in other words, indigenisation of services and programs.

CHAPTER 8

A QUEST FOR INDIGENISATION

8.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter depicted the nature of IO and LP relationship by identifying major factors impacting on the cooperation between them. It also highlighted the importance of ensuring equal and mutual cooperation via the use of power and control and fundamental professional principles. However, the central question raised by this analysis is how these cooperative efforts can help in the development of ‘indigenised’ social work in Vietnam.

This final chapter of findings examines how the concept of indigenisation is made into reality through three key themes: (i) cultural relevance, (ii) context appropriateness, and (iii) localisation in contributing to the development of indigenous and authentic service programs. First, the chapter discusses the issue of cultural relevance and its implications for respecting local cultures, valuing traditions and customs in child care, and taking into account cultural diversity. Subsequently, it examines the way in which context appropriateness can be applied to make IO programs transferable and relevant to local circumstances. The last section of the chapter focuses on analysing how localisation or, in the participants’ words, “Vietnamising” can take place through an ongoing process that involves adjustment, the attainment of local knowledge and practice, and the development of a Vietnamese social work identity.

8.2 Cultural Relevance

Participants identified and emphasised cultural relevance as the first and foremost aspect in indigenising social work services for local disadvantaged children. This is particularly relevant to Vietnam whose culture is heavily influenced by Confucianism. Confucianism puts a different complexion on the original Western conception of the social work profession (see Section 1.3.2.2). This section explores how participants

defined cultural relevance by understanding and respecting local cultures, local child care traditions, and local cultural diversity.

8.2.1 Respecting Local Cultures

In responding to the question of how to make IO programs culturally relevant, participants first indicated the necessity of respecting local cultures throughout the development of professional services. This was spelled out in the interviews with two LP officers. LPP4 who is a provincial leader in child care and protection stated:

When bringing social work knowledge and practice to Vietnam, IOs need to take into consideration introducing selective approaches that are relevant to Vietnamese traditions and customs. Nowadays, when one carries out any activity, one needs to have knowledge. But more importantly, one must know how to transfer that knowledge to the local communities' customs for an appropriate child care approach. (LPP4)

This approach was detailed by LPP5, who has extensive work experience with an ethnic minority community. She noted:

IO service programs have to respect the Dao's⁶ customs, because they are embedded in the ancient era and highly valued by our people. (LPP5)

In addition, participants critically pointed out the risk of cultural domination on the locale if IO programs did not respect local cultures. Both IOP13 and LPP8 warned about this, saying:

Often IOs' professional interventions, when introduced in Vietnam, have their origins and their concepts and definitions from Western countries. So when social work is applied to the Vietnamese context, an oriental society, IOs should not impose their culture on us. It takes time to make these concepts and definitions suitable for local cultures. (IOP13)

Social work services should not impose their values on local cultures. What one must study carefully is the local culture. In the present context of the 'flat and opened world', there is a high risk of cultural imposition and local cultures are often ignored. (LPP8)

These two participants critically analysed the need to pay attention to how social work knowledge and practice can be transferred to a non-Western culture. LPP8, referring

⁶ The Dao is one ethnic group with population of 450000 people. They live in the northern mountainous area of Vietnam. Their creed of polytheism is influenced by Confucianism and orthodox Taoism.

to the “flat and opened world”, pointed out that countries, like Vietnam which were closed, are open now to many competing traditions through globalisation. This could create opportunities for Western cultural domination. As an illustration he told the researcher about the success of the CHL model. In this program, from the beginning of the designing stage, they had to take into consideration a number of Vietnamese cultural factors, such as traditional childcare methods, ways of communication, or how children and adults wanted to reveal their ideas and information. Thus, being open to learning local cultural characteristics is very important for IOs whose work concerns social development. However, what actually should be learned and brought into local practice is a crucial question that needs to be cautiously addressed. Thus, cultural self-reflection is an essential professional development characteristic. An international IO officer noticed:

I do have to reflect a lot upon the cultural differences between, you know, myself, my education as a social worker in Australia and where Vietnam is at with social work. (IOP3)

This comment confirms that personal reflection and adaptation to the local culture is a requirement for IO officers and staff. The majority of studied IOs employ Vietnamese people. This is an advantage for personal reflection. However, these staff still should be aware of dealing with culture differences, particularly with those who are professionally trained overseas. According to IOP13, cultural conflicts among IO staff affected their cooperation with LPs. She noted:

Sometimes it is difficult for the local people when we conduct projects. Some of our staff are very much Westernised, whereas some are very traditional. They often do not agree with each other. (IOP13)

This strong message calls for thoughtful self-reflection on respecting local cultures so that IO programs can be appropriately applied in local settings.

Generally, IO and LP participants stressed the significance of understanding and respecting local cultures in professionalising the services. The key message was for IOs and LPs to understand that social work was developed in the global North, thus when it was applied to the global South, it had to fit in with Southern cultures. They also warned about the danger of cultural colonisation if local cultures were neglected.

To explain this point in more depth, the following section details how valuing local traditions in child care and protection can contribute to making cultural programs relevant.

8.2.2 Valuing Local Traditions in Child Care

Influenced by Confucianism, Vietnam values the family and communal cultures (see Section 1.3.2). This contributes to the formation of a traditional concept of child care and protection. High expectations are put on the extended family to provide support for children in special circumstances. Indeed, this derives from Confucianism, which emphasises strong intimate links between extended family members. It is believed that the family should be responsible for caring, as much as possible, for their vulnerable members. Both IOs and LPs were well aware of this. As an LP participant said:

Vietnamese people put high a value on relatives and the ancestral homeland. Therefore, in child care and protection, priority should be given to grandparents, uncles, and aunts. If those people are not able to do this, then other relatives are given a chance. If there is no one from the family, the centres [SPCs] will take care of them. (LPP1)

This comment illustrates the hierarchical priority of child care that stresses the role of family members, especially those that are biologically closer to the children, in providing child care and protection. The same viewpoint was presented by an LP who came from a province in central Vietnam. He noted, “the Vietnamese people rely on family and clans. This must be clearly understood by IOs and LPs” (LPP4). He maintained that this tradition has strongly influenced the way in which alternative care models, such as adoption or foster care, were designed and developed in his provincial communities. He elaborated that, in his province, there were communities where people did not want to send orphaned children away to other communities, so they used the “nhà Rông” [the traditional communal hall] for raising these vulnerable children.

Supporting this idea, LPP2 provided an example of how his ministry built their policy of care for orphaned and abandoned children based on traditional values. He explained:

For IOs, developing kinship care or foster care services are fairly similar. However, in Vietnam when we design and develop policy planning we have to define priorities. The first priority promotes conditions for children living closest to their biological families. Traditionally, that is called ‘falling from the small flat basket to the large flat basket’⁷ [in Vietnamese, "lọt sàng xuống nia"]. (LPP2)

This local leader stressed the necessity of being mindful of bringing this cultural characteristic into the formulation of policies.

IO participants’ comments supported the LP viewpoint of respecting useful local child care customs. For example, IOP4 noted:

Vietnam has its own cultural child care system, in which relatives are responsible for looking after the family’s vulnerable children. In case a sister has a problem, her brother or brother-in-law will automatically be in charge of caring for her children. If the relatives cannot, then people from the community can become involved. (IOP4)

Hence, these participants are saying, being aware of local traditions and customs in child care is crucial in identifying supportive interventions that match the local context.

With further regard to cultural application, an IO colleague suggested:

We have to consider the different cultural factors. For example, alternative care in foreign countries is highly developed. Many families in the community are willing to adopt any child. In Vietnam, it is not so, people just want to adopt their relatives’ children. So kinship care is more developed and more relevant compared to overseas. (IOP2)

This is a practical illustration of taking into consideration the customs and traditions in deciding what kinds of services and programs should be developed to fit local cultures. Promoting useful local cultural methods of child care is important for developing authentic services. Nevertheless, against this, IOP5 suggested that IOs and LPs should be cautious of cultural traditions that discourage the Vietnamese from seeking counselling and other social work services. This participant argued that there are weaknesses in local traditions and cultures, which could be improved by embracing other child care models and practices.

⁷ This saying literally describes the way in which grain rice is classified falling from a bigger traditional rice making basket to a smaller one and it never hit ground since it always is protected. However, in the figurative sense, it means there is always protected net from the same family to a vulnerable child like the grain rice.

In short, valuing local traditional childcare practices was confirmed as being as important as other factors in building suitable programs in child care and protection, especially in the development of new professional care models, such as alternative care. Nonetheless, it was suggested that both IO and LP should develop a strategy for encouraging local people to accept other professional interventions. Thus, a critical question raised is how IOs can effectively take advantage of local cultural traditions and customs in such a way that they can also challenge unhelpful child care practices and so encourage alternative services for disadvantaged children.

Besides paying attention to local traditions and customs, one must also recognise the diversity within the local culture. This will be discussed in the next section.

8.2.3 Cultural Diversity

Participants' responses paid attention to cultural diversity during the overall process of introducing programs for children and families. With her considerable work experience in the mountainous north-western province of Dien Bien, LPP17 stated that her agency and IO counterpart had to thoughtfully consider the cultures and customs of other minority groups, such as the H'Mong and Thai people, throughout the implementing process of the community-based child care and protection program. She listed important factors that had been discussed and put into their service program, including customs, living habits and conditions, education, and especially taboos. She explained that there were things that IO program designers had to avoid in order to prevent offending people, such as not working with the communities during their time of worship, and not touching the heads of children. An IO colleague in another program also emphasised that they had to be aware of the Dao customs even when undertaking small activities, such as scheduling meetings with community leaders and locals. IOP17 noticed:

There is culture factor that affects our program. For example, when working with the Dao ethnic group in Ba Vi, we had to avoid contacting them on the days they gave spiritual offerings. (IOP17)

This officer said that in this community the leader was in charge of conducting community spiritual worship, so they should not schedule any activities with leaders

on those special days. Moreover, outsiders should not come into the villages these days. It is apparent that this IO knows how to adjust their program to fit into the local culture.

A Dao LP officer recounted:

When we were implementing the program we had to tell our people that this program did not violate our old customs. Therefore, it would not affect the villagers. For example, we had to explain that drinking milk was not related to their taboo of not eating dog meat. Thus, this program did not harm our cultures. (LPP5)

The main message suggests that IOs and LPs should respect ethnic minority's spiritual practices and make adjustment to local circumstances. Any change, no matter how small, that fits with the cultural diversity, enables IOs and LPs to work within local communities.

In addition to paying attention to cultural diversity between ethnic groups, participants from both IOs and LPs noted the way differences in cultural habits between regions affect the provision of services. This issue was pointed out by IOP14, who claimed:

Culturally, people in the south are more open, whereas, in Hanoi, it is relatively formal. (IOP14)

Hence, understanding cultural differences allows IOs to mobilise the LPs' strengths in developing their service programs.

In summary, cultural relevance emerged as an important theme in regard to indigenising IO programs in Vietnam. Three areas of concern, consisting of cultural appropriateness, the traditional way of caring for children, and cultural diversity, were discussed in this section. The following key messages were conveyed: being conscious of cultural imperialism, knowing how to mobilise local indigenous cultural strengths in child care and protection, and taking account of local cultural diversity in IO service program development creatively and intelligently.

The next section follows on from this by drawing together perspectives on contextualising IO work.

8.3 Context Appropriateness

According to participants, context appropriateness played an important role in indigenising the social work profession and its services for local disadvantaged children. This concept is basically about how IOs should understand the locals. Additionally, it is how IO programs fit into the local social, economics, and political structures and conditions.

It is understandable that participants paid considerable attention to raising the need for developing IO context appropriate programs. As an IO participant emphasised:

It [the professional service] always has to fit with the local context. We [IOs and LPs] need to accept the situation. ... Knowledge is only one part of the program; practical context is also another very important part. (IOP12)

Expressed in a slightly different way, IOP21 stressed the necessity of context appropriateness in a particular location. She argued:

Any IO program that is operating in this province must be differently applied to another province. In the child protection system, it is not 'one size fits all'. This is because each location has its own differences in organisational structure, protection systems, and official knowledge, and how to work with children. (IOP21)

Most important in her statement was the concept that "no one size fits all". To illustrate this, IOP21 compared two locations: Ha Giang (a province in the northern mountainous area) and Hanoi (the urban area). In her view, there were multiple differences between these two locations, which led to great disparities in the approach to child problems and supportive services. Specifically, in child sexual issues, the nature of the problem was very different: in Ha Giang it was underage marriage whereas in Hanoi, online sexual exploitation was an increasing worry. Hence, if IOs want to make an effective contribution to improve local disadvantaged children's lives, all of these differences need to be taken into account for the development of professional services. As such, context appropriateness is seen a 'necessity' for real change to occur.

For one LP participant because context relevance was a requirement for launching an IO service program when they were introduced to international models the first

thing they did was to see whether these models fit into the broader context of Vietnam. LPP2 said:

We have to consider whether the application of international experience in Vietnam is appropriate to the local areas' particular socio-economic conditions, culture, and human resources. (LPP2)

This comment complements the IO participants' views on the significance of context appropriateness. However, a question that can be posed is in which way can both IO and LP perspectives on context appropriateness be matched and applied in service programs for local vulnerable children. This was partially discussed in Chapter 7 and will be further addressed in Chapter 9.

To examine in detail the participants' perspective on the criteria for meeting context appropriateness, the following sections present four requirements, starting with understanding the particular locality.

8.3.1 Understanding the Locality

Understanding local context is crucial in making IO programs appropriate for communities. Participants highlighted the necessity of having an in-depth study of the local cultures, local systems, the real local needs, and available resources. In their view, getting a comprehensive understanding and study of the local context was a good preparatory step for IO programs to be contextualised.

First, it was necessary to learn and know local cultural characteristics (as discussed in Section 8.2). Two participants suggested the examination of local cultural practices. One said:

Before the program is implemented, they [IOs] need to study and understand the prospective community's customs and culture. (LPP14)

Similarly, IOP5 also emphasised that getting to know the local cultural environment was vital for an appropriate orientation for the development of relevant service programs.

Second, participants suggested surveying the local context in various areas, such as the local system structures, needs, and practical conditions. IOP6 compared the local situation with a neighbouring country, and concluded:

Actually, Vietnam is different; our political and social structure is entirely different. I cannot bring another model and apply it to Vietnam, that's for sure. Working in Vietnam, people must understand this structural difference. We know that Vietnam follows a Socialist system. We must understand the nature of Socialism, the importance of the Government's role and the structure of the Government. (IOP6)

This viewpoint refers to the importance of learning local political features during the process of professional development in order to make it match neatly with local directions.

Having a similar viewpoint, LPP12 also recommended:

In order to have appropriate programs, it is necessary to conduct research to know the actual conditions of the locality, such as the social policies, political structure, and, particularly, local needs, and the children's situations. (LPP12)

Another LP participant additionally emphasised:

I think first IOs must know the local situation. For example, if they want to operate a model in Hanoi, they need to study whether it is feasible to open that model in Hanoi or somewhere else. Feasibility here does not mean how you spend the money; it is what impacts on people, what benefits can be obtained. (LPP10)

There was also a high degree of unanimity between LP colleagues LPP13 and LPP16 about fully understanding local features and characteristics in order to identify the support needed by local people.

Notably, the children who participated in a focus group raised their concerns on a number of questions that program developers needed to tackle. They all agreed with one child who stated:

First they [program designers] have to grasp the social factors of the locale where they want to introduce a program. They need to ask what are the difficulties disadvantaged children facing? What activities have local people introduced and implemented? And what are the benefits of these activities or projects for the community? (GD3)

While LP and children participants' comments focused on broadly understanding the locality, IO participants were concerned about assessing the nature of local problems and the availability of resources. IOP2 raised a series of questions:

What is the problem of the host country? What are its needs? And then we review the institutional, organisational structures for implementation: Who are

the implementers? What are their qualifications? Finally, we have to change the model to make it fit into the structures. (IOP2)

She clearly identified two main areas that IO program developers had to learn before introducing their services to the locale, namely local difficulties and the local structural system for operation. Sharing the same idea, IOP4 suggested starting with learning the:

community problems and identifying what resources are most lacking and the urgent issues of the society. (IOP4)

Generally, this section has touched upon the importance of having a comprehensive understanding of the local context. This was seen as a recognisable preparation for developing context appropriate service programs for disadvantaged children. Participants strongly suggested exploring and learning about the local cultures, local structures and conditions, and especially disadvantaged children and the community's problems.

The next section further explores the way in which these programs can fit in with the locality in the aspect of the local developmental level.

8.3.2 Fitting into Local Stage of Development

Local context appropriateness was also defined by the way in which IO programs address the question of how closely they were aligned with the national and local stage of development. In this sense, IO programs should start by taking into accounts the available resources and operational conditions of each locality. Professionally, this is similar to the social work principle of 'start where our clients are'.

When asked how they think about context appropriateness, the majority of IO participants shared a common interest in both looking at the local developmental level and implementing circumstances. Two IO officers were particularly enthusiastic about stressing the importance IO programs' suitability to the local developmental progress. One noted:

It [IO program] must be appropriate to the developmental level of the nation. We need to make suitable solutions that are doable at the local level. If a solution given is not possible for Vietnam, it does not work. (IOP4)

This participant was in agreement with her colleague who believed that starting at the same local level directed IOs to make their program context relevant. This IO participant stated:

IO programs should be in accordance with the development of Vietnam. This ensures they are on the right track. For example, it is like when we want to build a house, we cannot build a house in an express way. It must be constructed gradually by mobilising local contributions for bricks, tiles, and other building materials based on local available resources. (IOP1)

Her use of the house metaphor restates an important professional concept of a strength-based service program that should be developed on the basis of local capacity. Even though it takes time to build the ‘professional services’ house, IOs cannot rush development of their programs if local development is not ready. This reminds IOs to take into account the local perspectives to adjust their program to suit local conditions. However, this needs to be worked out in a joint effort between IOs and LPs in order to find a common solution which not only improves the local capacity, but also is comparable to the local operational competence.

Asserting this similar point about local resources, IOP4 compared the development of services for vulnerable children to the choice of whether one should buy a car or a bike in a rural community. Practically, with the current conditions of road quality, budget constraints, and people capacity, a bike would be the preferred solution. She emphasised “let’s make services appropriate to and feasible with the resources and other conditions” (IOP4). For her, this was a basic philosophy that needed to be ensured in any service program. She also provided an example of how the Swedish model for children in conflict with the law was. The services in this model were excellent. She and most of her colleagues believed it was an ideal model. However, a difficult question they had to address was whether it was applicable to Vietnam’s present conditions, which lacked a social work workforce, had poor infrastructure needed for service implementation, and other legal considerations for professional practice. Nevertheless, although they could not immediately transfer this model to Vietnam, some parts of that program have been gradually implemented in accordance with strengthened local capacities. Therefore, IOs and LPs constantly need to decide

which part of the overseas model needs to be adapted to the locale and which parts cannot be applied based on the local level of development.

Comments from LP participants focused on analysing the necessity of IO programs' relevance to the local level's political structures and stage of development. LPP4 noted:

Most importantly, IOs need to answer the question of how their programs can be applied to Vietnamese institutions and the level of administration in Vietnam. That is a crucial point. (LPP4)

He gave the example of an Australian model—the Mackillop Family Service that provides a wide range of care services for children, young people and their families, especially for those who experience distress, disadvantage, and abuse. When LPP4 heard about this, he found it very interesting. However, he thought it could not be developed in his province because of the different local structural system and resource availability. He suggested that Vietnam should not exactly copy overseas models. They needed to be adapted to the Vietnamese organisational and administrative systems.

In addition to this, LPP9 suggested that IOs should pay attention to the local social developmental visions. He stated:

IO programs must align with the developmental activities. They should be active in proposing initiatives supporting local developmental strategies. (LPP9)

He argued that if IO programs could meet local developmental demands, they would develop and become localised.

This section focused on participants' discussion in response to the question of how IO programs could be context appropriate by meeting the local level of development and practical conditions. The key notion learned from participants' comments is that IO service development should start from where local capacities are.

In addition, participants suggested IO program designers and managers should consider how their programs fit with local needs and demands, which will be discussed in the following section.

8.3.3 Fitting into Local Needs

As previously discussed in Chapter 6, meeting local needs was key to service professionalization and it was of prime importance in developing context appropriate professional services for disadvantaged children. IOP4 informed the researcher that IO services could only become context appropriate if they were built on the basis of local needs. She took the SWSC as an illustration in indigenising IO programs. She explained why this model was designed:

We needed to find a kind of model that addresses the needs of the most vulnerable groups, such as sexually abused children, children in conflict with the law, and children with disabilities. It is clear that charity work alone could not solve this problem. For example, a child seriously abused or a child in conflict with the law, needed to have professional support authorised by the government. Thus, the first solution for developing the SWSC was based on local needs. (IOP4)

The SWSC provides an example of indigenising by fitting in with local needs. Since its establishment in 2010, this service model has grown substantially (MOLISA, 2014a) (see Section 5.3.1.1).

Another successful example is an IO outreach program for children and families in difficult circumstances. IOP17 claimed that her organisation's program was context relevant because it was built on the need for day care services for children. She confirmed that this program "was launched in response to local needs, and did not follow any overseas model at all" (IOP17).

Generally, according to participants, catering to local needs was a way to ensure the context relevance of IO programs for disadvantaged children. It was the basis for building indigenous programs.

The next section addresses another theme identified by participants in keeping IO programs' context appropriate: fitting with local orientations, policies, and the structural system at different administrative levels.

8.3.4 Fitting with Local Orientations, Policies, and Administrative System

Context appropriateness in the participants' perspective also meant that the IO service programs should be in line with local orientations, policies, and structural systems

from the central to communal levels. This is particularly important in Vietnam whose society is highly structured (as noted in Section 1.3.1 and Section 1.3.6.2).

Participants' messages consistently emphasised the importance of respecting local orientations, policies and structures because that ensured the IO programs were in keeping with the local child care and protection system. One IO officer stated:

We have to follow the central government's orientation, and policies, and particularly align with our direct local partners' guidelines in order to keep our programs context appropriate. (IOP1)

To have IO programs appropriately being contextualised, LP participants encouraged IOs to take in to account how to make their programs fit into the local legal and administrative structures. One affirmed that: "IOs should abide by the governmental directions set in legal documents" (LPP12). This idea was echoed by three LP colleagues. While LPP9 insisted that the IO programs "should be strictly oriented toward the government development of child protection work" (LPP9), the other two discussed how this could contribute to the success of IO programs. LPP11 explained this concern by talking about local regulations.

Successful IO services have to be based on the rules of each country. ... IOs should engage with the Vietnamese government implementation policies. (LPP11)

This participant wanted to send his message of paying attention to local policies as well as the rules of action so that their programs could suit the local system.

In essence, fitting into local orientations and systems was emphasised by participants, mostly by LP officers. This was seen as a necessary condition for IO programs to mainstream into political and administrative structures. Therefore, participants suggested that the development of IO programs should be in line with the local governmental directions and development trends. By doing so, their services for disadvantaged children could be contextualised.

In summary, this section has examined how participants perceived context appropriateness as one of the crucial factors for indigenising IO programs. The need for examining and learning local cultures, policies, and structural systems was discussed first. Second, IO programs needed to be based on the local developmental stage and

available resources. Participants discussed how IO programs could be developed in a way that was suitable for local needs and social demands. Finally, participants stressed the importance of ensuring IO service programs were in line with local government directives. This helped to mainstream their programs as part of local services. However, both IOs and LPs must be conscious of keeping the professional quality requirements of their service programs since it is easy to be assimilated with poor quality local service programs.

Indigenising IO service programs is not only understood by cultural relevance and context appropriateness, but also by the way in which these program are localised in Vietnam. The next section analyses how participants view this process.

8.4 Localisation

Localisation was understood in regard to how IO programs are contextualised through a process of adjustment, local knowledge and experience attainment, and the development of Vietnamese social work identity. A common perspective about the need for “Vietnamising” social work programs coloured many interviews. Nonetheless, participants advised this should be a thoughtful localisation. The following comment is from an LP officer who has a master’s degree in social work.

It [the social work profession] is quite new and very interesting. It also meets the needs we have lacked. So Vietnamese people, including the distinguished groups in society are too ready to welcome it. They like it, but in fact, they are very vague about it. (LPP9)

This comment describes the way in which local people respond to something newly adopted. For him, this became a normal phenomenon in the society. This prompts the question of how to localise the imported social work profession in the local environment. Without such localisation, it could be adopted in a dogmatic way. As a result, it could fail to serve local disadvantaged children effectively. One participant said:

Sometimes we go to SPCs and when I try to apply what I would do in Australia, it doesn’t work. (IOP3)

By saying this, she hoped to send a message to other IOs and LPs to be well aware of making appropriate professional interventions for the community. Coming from a

country which is highly developed, and very different in practice, it is important to be conscious of how to indigenise adopted service programs for local vulnerable children.

LPP3 had a similar attitude about the necessary of Vietnamising IO service programs. He explained:

May be they [social work services] are good in their countries. But when bringing overseas social work interventions to Vietnam and applying them identically to our clients, they cannot help. (LPP3)

In his opinion, it was not acceptable to just adopt IO developed services from a foreign country to solve the same problems of the local clients. This is reflected in the social work principle of respecting individual characteristics and differences.

Nevertheless, localising IO programs is a huge challenge. IOP4 acknowledged that:

The problem is how to help the government to carry out this task [social work professionalisation] by integrating international knowledge but Vietnamising it. How to 'Vietnamise' international experience is a great challenge. (IOP4)

With years of experience working in this area, this IO leader said that localisation required much involvement and effort from both IOs and LPs. To have an indigenous and authentic professional service programs for disadvantaged children in Vietnam, IOs and LPs need to take into consideration three main aspects, starting with the task of program adjustment to the local context.

8.4.1 The Adjustment Process

Adjustment is an indispensable element in localising IO service programs. Participants asserted that if there were no appropriate adjustments, this could create “unhealthy professional development” (IOP5). IOP5 was very concerned about how some IO overseas programs were being implemented in Vietnam without proper adjustments. In addition, LPP11 stated that: “in program implementation, activities must be adapted to children’s situations within the locality” (LPP11). He elaborated on a number of other issues: children’s living conditions, family circumstances, and social policies and programs. It seems that IO programs are only widely introduced when they are adjusted in accordance with the local context. As seen in many participants’ responses, to accept and be ready to make changes for localising services was vital. Moreover, adjustment should be taken into account at both national and local levels.

One IO participant, who worked in a direct service delivering organisation, spoke of her vocational program for children and youth in difficult circumstances. She noted that they adopted an Australian model, but could not apply it to Vietnam as it was, because “the context is different” (IOP9). For her, adjustment was central to IO services’ success. For example, in her program, they had to change the training curriculum, add a course on life skills training, and adjust the practicum methods.

Many participants felt that adjustments were needed in many IO cooperative programs. For instance, the local program manager (LPP8) of the CHL emphasised that this service model had to be modified from the original model in India. He explained that this service model was initiated by an IO counterpart and became used worldwide. Nonetheless, when it was introduced in Vietnam, many debates were conducted to address the question of how it was to be contextualised. As a result, many components and activities of the model had to be changed to fit the local conditions, such as the managing mechanism, technical methods for receiving and answering phone calls, and ways to provide direct support for vulnerable children. Thanks to those amendments, he could confidently assert that the CHL in Vietnam had its own characteristics, which were different from its original model.

Another concrete example of a program adjustment was provided by an overseas IO officer in vocational training. He stated:

We had to make some changes to our program; for example, expanding the life skills training duration, introducing more relevant life skills for local disadvantaged children, prolonging the work readiness period, and introducing different staff and positions to assist [our service user] throughout the process. So a lot of these things have been updated that aren't in the original model. (IOP16)

He was proud that this program was recognised as a successful contextualised model. The success of this IO program makes a strong theoretical point for localisation. However, the question that challenges IOs and LP is in which way adjustments need to be conducted so that IO programs are accepted by local people whilst keeping their professional qualities.

It is not only the adjustment of program activities that need to be addressed, but also the modification of professional interventions. For example, IOP2 described how this professional adjustment took place:

Adjustment has been made in the case management procedure. In Australia or in Sweden, assessment in this process is very complex and requires 47 indicators. However, when it was applied in Vietnam, it was cut down to only 25 indicators. This is because there are not enough professionals and the involvement of different sectors and fields in conducting assessments is limited. We have to reduce the complexity of case assessment to match our practical conditions. (IOP2)

A further discussion took place with this participant about how to make professional adjustments but still keep the quality of services. The outcome envisioned was that IOs and LPs should carefully identify the key professional elements of the intervention that were manageable by the local staff. Moreover, this process should be reviewed and updated regularly to meet professional standards. Noticeably, an LP colleague stressed professional modification for different communities. She stated: “some assessment forms and indicators should be modified differently from province to province” (LPP17).

One IO and two LP participants also spoke of making relevant adjustment. While the IO officer indicated the need for IO flexibility in adapting their services programs, the two local colleagues set a requirement for LPs to proactively engage in the adjustment process. IOP10 noted:

We have to accept the difficulties of a social entrepreneur and have to adjust so that our service programs do not conflict with other programs, but are in harmony with them. (IOP10)

From her perspective, preparation for making adjustments and coping with difficulties was a decisive factor in successfully localising IO service programs.

Interestingly, the roles of LPs in actively proposing adjustments was highlighted by LPP1 and LPP4. LPP1, a ministerial department leader, stated:

We [LPs] should study and propose suitable models for Vietnam. It is not the case that complete foreign models should be imported without necessary adjustment. (LPP1)

In a different scenario, LPP4 stressed LPs’ responsibility for orienting IO support in local system. He stated:

We must know how to take advantage of their [IOs] knowledge and we should introduce them to Vietnam's framework, to our provincial systems to make it appropriate. By doing this, IO programs will be accepted by local people. (LPP4)

The above two messages illustrate LPs' essential involvement in the process of localising IO support programs. Obviously, LPs are those who understand the local needs and situations very well. Thus, they are important change agents in the development of indigenous and authentic services for disadvantaged children.

Some IOs used pilots in testing IO service models to see how they ran in practice and what needed to be amended to fit the local context. An IO officer specified:

When the pilot models prove to be useful in practice, we will transfer them fully to the government. If they are not successful, we will not replicate them anymore. (IOP1)

This appears to be an effective way of making adjustments via practical experience. It should be noted that this is a form of conducting evidence-based indigenous service program development. An LP colleague agreed with IOP1.

We need to build two to three pilot models and consult with the local people to see their appropriateness to the locality and whether the community accepts the models. (LPP10)

It can be seen that piloting programs can provide a good exploratory environment to gauge how well they are localised. Importantly, lessons learned from this process are useful for IOs and LPs to improve program appropriateness and develop more relevant services.

In short, this section has addressed the first part of the question of localising IO service programs for disadvantaged children. Participants strongly believed in the importance of IO program adjustment, which was seen as one quality requirement of service localisation. Three areas of focus were identified: service programs and professional adjustment, LPs' active roles in the localisation process, and piloting for indigenous models.

The next section presents another aspect of localisation—acquiring local knowledge and experience.

8.4.2 Acquiring Local Knowledge and Experience

Participants' interest in localisation included how to acquire local knowledge and experience in the process of IO program indigenisation. Their comments focused on solving the problem of getting as much involvement from local people, and the LP participants, as possible in the development of services for disadvantaged children and the social work profession.

One IO project coordinator stated:

When we adjusted our programs, there was more participation from the Vietnam side because the Vietnamese people can understand what level of their capacity they need to contribute and work on. (IOP2)

For her, the input from Vietnamese counterparts was essential for service localisation since IO experts often supported models that were of high international standards. Clearly, LPs know the local needs, structural system, and conditions, including the strengths and weakness of the social environment.

There were two issues that participants stressed concerning how local knowledge and experience could be developed and applied in IO programs: getting the involvement of local people and working along side LPs.

8.4.2.1 Involvement of Local People

As mentioned in the previous chapters, the involvement of local people was important to the developing of need-based service programs for vulnerable children. This was identified as an essential factor for constructing indigenous and authentic service programs. Most of the participants appreciated local people's comments and feedback for IO programs, particularly those who came from communities and participated in service models. One foreign IO program officer said:

What we are encouraging in SPC is to invite people who are actually involved in day care services to participate in the meetings to provide feedback on the guidelines. They are the people who have the knowledge and understanding. That is really getting to these people, the gatekeepers of local knowledge and experiences. (IOP3)

This IO participant stressed the centrality of respect for the local "gatekeepers" of local knowledge and experiences. This was extremely critical for IO programs. She also

suggested that IOs would benefit through this strategy as it encouraged reciprocal learning.

A creative application of a community engagement strategy used by an IO program was shared by an LP participant of the Dao ethnic minority.

First we have to take IO project officers to see the most important people in the commune. Then they need to come and see the local agencies for their opinions. I think they also need to see the People's Committee and the security section, then the leaders of the villages. (LPP5)

She added that in her community, the elderly and the spiritual worshipers were the most important people. This again reminds IO and LP officers to pay attention to local customs and traditions during their engagement with local people.

This topic was also well recognised by the children who participated as community collaborators in a community-based child care and protection project. For example, the leader of this group said:

It is necessary to involve the local people, such as villagers. ... I think when people understand the project's purpose and target clients they will agree to participate. Moreover, when the project is implemented they may also have a team of community volunteers. (GD3)

This child indicated how important the community people's role was but also pointed to the willingness of the community to embrace the IO programs.

Additionally, local knowledge and practice was particularly important for policy development. Two participants mentioned this in their response to indigenisation. While the LP talked about the usefulness of local background knowledge in producing appropriate social policy documents, the IO counterpart emphasised the process of making IO support in policy development work in practice. The local participant stated:

The area of policy and laws requires domestic policy makers or legislators to understand the ideas, the local technical requirement and the local issues and so on. Thus, policy development must include the involvement of national experts. (LPP1)

IOP4 thought that IOs and LPs could get general recommendations on professional policy development from international experts, but Vietnamese people were needed to translate these policies into practice. She explained:

To make international experts' recommendations become effective requires qualified Vietnamese people who have the capacity to assess and come up with solutions and policies. Surely, if we are dealing with developing policies in Vietnam, we need Vietnamese people. (IOP4)

It can be seen that local people's expertise is an important issue in acquiring indigenous knowledge and practice.

In addition to this, participants mentioned the need to work alongside their local counterparts.

8.4.2.2 Working with Local Partners

Working with LPs was thought as important for acquiring the local knowledge and, especially, practical experience. IO Participants acknowledged the need for close cooperation and regular exchange with their LPs. As an IO leader in child care and protection explained:

Our capacity as well as our understanding [of the locale] is limited. Because this field is so new, it is difficult to implement our organisational strategies. Thus, we need the cooperation of and partnership with many local institutions, research institutes, researchers, and Vietnamese experts. (IOP4)

With her working experience in the social work professionalisation of child welfare, she was very concerned with getting involvement from local stakeholders. Without good team work with LPs, for her, it was impossible for IOs to contribute to localising IO service programs. A different IO participant provided an additional illustration of this, noting:

During the process of developing IO program guidelines, the government was also involved. Both sides had to jointly build these guidelines to make them the best fit with Vietnam. (IOP2)

Specifically, another IO colleague spoke about the advantages of working together with LPs during program development.

When IOs help build the service models, they are required to work with the local partners to review, make comments and provide technical support in assessing models. If this part of a model is not relevant, the IO experts have to work with the Vietnamese experts to solve the problem. (IOP1)

Besides the emphasis on working with LPs, participants also understood the necessity of working with other local stakeholders to attain their knowledge and experience for service program development. For example, IOP5 noticed:

It is important to coordinate closely with other NGOs and civil society in Vietnam to engage and acquire their practical experiences in professional development. (IOP5)

With extensive working experience with IOs, he believed that his Vietnamese counterparts would develop independent professional services.

In short, two major issues were analysed in this section. First, participants showed their recognition of the engagement of local people who were named 'local knowledge gatekeepers' in localisation. The influential role of local people in making IO programs localised was undeniable since they had practical experience and were knowledgeable about the locality. Second, focus was also put on the reciprocal nature of team work between IOs and LPs. For IO participants, working with LPs provided a good opportunity to mobilise LP input for building indigenous services.

In the process of localising professional services for disadvantaged children, another vital aspect mentioned was developing a Vietnamese professional identity.

8.4.3 Developing a Vietnamese Social Work Identity

Participants showed a similar sentiment about having a national identity in the social work profession. Their comments are a reminder that it is time to promote the issue of developing Vietnamese professional characteristics. This is particularly so when Vietnam is experiencing professional confusion and conflict in social work's theoretical and practical approaches. This was raised by IOP5 who has witnessed the overall development of professional services for disadvantaged children. He shared his disappointment with professionals who brought exactly what they were trained with overseas in the USA, the UK, Sweden, and Canada into Vietnam. This careless application led to unhelpful professional understanding and practice. Therefore, this section presents participants' identification of the core elements of Vietnamese social work and what aspects of international standards should be adopted.

It is not easy to find an answer for the question of what shape Vietnamese social work should take. However, a sense of Vietnamese social work identity can be derived from the interviews with IO and LP participants. First, they confirmed the significance of having professional independence in Vietnam. For example, an IO participant stated: “the importance of social work development in Vietnam is not dependent on overseas social work” (IOP5). Similarly, IOP3 argued:

Well, the identity of social work in Vietnam, of course, is very different from the identity of social work in England, Australia, the Netherlands or India. As the years go by, I am sure that [social work here] will be shaped further through the knowledge that will be generated through the needs that exist here in Vietnam. (IOP3)

Clearly, Vietnamese social work needs to have its own characteristics that differentiate it from other countries. In response to the question of what the main features of Vietnamese social work are, several aspects were identified. They are: (i) Vietnamese social work must be constructed in response to local needs and issues, (ii) it must be suitable to local culture, and (iii) it must build its own indigenous body of knowledge.

8.4.3.1 Response to Local Needs and Issues

An IO noted that Vietnamese social work “should stem from what local needs are” (IOP6). In her opinion, local needs defined Vietnamese social work characteristics. Specifically, LPP2 said that addressing clients’ interests was one of the principles of social work in Vietnam.

In addition, an IO participant mentioned the essence of self-reliance in Vietnamese social work. He stressed:

Vietnamese social work has to attach itself to local orientations. It must be developed based on our capacity. Therefore, we must identify long-term objectives for the local social work profession, particularly developmental directions and guidelines. (IOP5)

This comment reflects the way in which Vietnamese social work should be constructed based on local policy directions, local strengths, and resources. He stated that international support was very good. However, local people should know how to use it effectively and intelligently in developing their own social work characteristics.

Nonetheless, he thought that because social work had been imported, Vietnam had not yet found its own direction. Thus, it was important to build its visions and mission. This poses the question of creating an indigenous definition of Vietnamese social work and professional concepts.

8.4.3.2 Cultural Suitability

Cultural suitability was another factor contributing significantly to local professional identity. As was noted in the previous section, cultural appropriateness was not only central to professional indigenisation, but also vital in social work's recognition and acceptance by Vietnamese people. IOP4 said that the social work profession in Vietnam "must be suitable to cultural conditions" (IOP4). Importantly, cultural suitability was also essential for building professional ethics. An LP thought:

Each country has its own cultural characteristics and ethical standards that differ from Vietnam. To identify Vietnamese social work characteristics, we must base them on cultural characteristics of Vietnam. (LPP2)

In his opinion, it was useful to consult codes of ethics in the USA, Australia, Singapore and other countries, but clearly Vietnamese professional ethics had to be built on its own culture and values.

8.4.3.3 Building Indigenous Body of Knowledge

Building indigenous professional knowledge and education was highlighted as a fundamental factor in characterising professional identity in Vietnam. Speaking of the necessity for local professional knowledge, an IO participant noted:

I think in order to build our local social work identity we must develop core definitions. For example, to build social work with children, you must first determine what is the best interest of the child. Based on clear definitions we can develop Vietnamese social work services and the profession. (IOP6)

The definitions that this participant referred to were core Vietnamese concepts for the social work profession, such as values, ethics, a rights-based approach, equality and justice. For her, at the moment, there were no localised professional definitions of these concepts. This caused many difficulties in the professionalisation of social work and its services in Vietnam. Thus, a key task for social work professionalisation was the

development of a body of indigenous professional knowledge. The question though is, how can indigenous knowledge be generated? In response to this, an IO officer stated:

A lot of what we do is very creative and you do have to test out, learn [and] reflect on why it works, why does it not work? Try different ways. We also need continuously to share our knowledge ... feed up and feed up until we have a really big body of knowledge. (IOP3)

For her, building professional indigenous knowledge took time. It was gradually built through practical experience. This process required much local effort. It was a process of trial and error through learning from experiences and practice.

An interesting idea shared by an IO participant was that Vietnam needed to have local training manuals. This participant stated:

[This organisation] found that first there must be standard social work textbooks which are 'Vietnamised'. So textbooks and materials need to be standardised at the first step, then the training system. (IOP12)

This program coordinator believed that localising had to start from education. Local appropriate training curricula and the education system would produce a qualified local workforce for social work practice in Vietnam.

Some participants were also concerned about maintaining international standards. Several aspects, such as fundamental principles, standards, and values had to be in keeping with international social work. For example an IO participant said:

It [Vietnamese social work] must ensure the basic philosophy, the basic principles, which are drawn internationally. ... The values and principles are common. (IOP4)

Another IO also added:

The theoretical framework is the same. ... So we use a common theoretical framework. (IOP5)

What she wanted to stress was that the Vietnamese social work theoretical framework was the same as international social work; however, that framework needed to be filled with indigenous knowledge and experiences.

This section addressed the issue of developing a Vietnamese social work identity by responding to local needs and issues, ensuring cultural suitability, and building indigenous knowledge. Participants also suggested Vietnamese social work should

keep the basic international professional principles, values, standards, and theoretical framework in order to make it suitable for the international community.

In summary, the very difficult question of localising IOs service programs and the social work profession in Vietnam was addressed in this part of the chapter. According to participants' viewpoints, localisation started from making appropriate adjustments within the local context. In this sense, the adjustment process required IOs and LPs making changes and modifications in their programs and professional interventions to fit with local resources and circumstances. Model piloting was seen as an effective initiative in program adjustment and adaptation to the local context. This served as an experimental stage of professional services to see whether they were relevant to local people. The second essential element was getting local knowledge and experience in the development of service programs and social work professionalisation. Participants' discussion and analysis aimed at attaining local knowledge and experience via the local people being involved and working alongside LPs. This helped to mobilise LP knowledge and practice in providing input for service programs. Finally, in the participants' perspective, localisation also meant having a Vietnamese social work identity. According to participants, Vietnamese social work contained features that derived from the locality. So the Vietnamese social work profession needed to be constructed on the foundation of addressing local needs and issues, fitting in with local cultures, and having indigenous knowledge. However, Vietnamese social work practitioners and educators need to keep international professional standards whilst indigenising social work.

8.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter has addressed an important question regarding the professionalisation of the social work in Vietnam, which was: How to indigenise a profession that originated from the global North to the South? As indicated in earlier chapters, changes have been achieved, thanks to the reintroduction of social work and its services for disadvantaged children in Vietnam. However, participants raised the critical need to consider how to "Vietnamise" the social work profession and its services. With participants, the question of how to build an indigenous and authentic social work in

Vietnam could be answered by operationalising the three following concepts: cultural relevance, context appropriateness, and localisation.

First, cultural relevance was defined by the way in which IO professional programs match local cultural features, respect local customs and traditions, value the local tradition of care, and accept cultural diversity. It should be noted that in the era of globalisation, there is a high tendency towards cultural imperialism, particularly where the social work profession has been newly adopted. Thus, culturally embedded service programs for disadvantaged children were crucial to social work indigenisation in Vietnam. Nonetheless, having a critical view on how to promote indigenous cultures in child care and protection and, at the same time, to encourage new professional services, is also extremely important.

Second, the concept of context appropriateness was analysed in terms of how IO programs could properly respond to the local context, local needs and demands, and local orientations and directives. Emphasis was put on the way IOs and LPs could develop their service programs based on local conditions and circumstances. This was seen as a complex factor that required IOs and LPs to consider the local contextual characteristics in developing relevant services with and for local people. Social developmental trends also were essential input for developing services programs for local disadvantaged children.

Finally, the process of localisation was structured by three fundamental elements, consisting of adjustment, local knowledge attainment, and social work identity construction. Vietnamising professional programs and the social work profession was stressed. This required enormous cooperative efforts from IOs and LPs. Initially, they needed to make appropriate changes and adjustments to fit local cultures and contexts. Acquiring adequate local knowledge and practice was seen as essential for developing indigenous and authentic professional programs. Lastly, the localised social work profession needed to define its own professional identity via the development of indigenous professional concepts and definitions at the same time as maintaining international standards.

The next chapter takes the findings that have been presented in Chapters 4 to 8 and

relates these to the conceptual and theoretical debates that were introduced in Chapters 1 to 3. In particular, Chapter 9 discusses the main findings and conclusions on IOs and social work professionalisation and the need for the development of Vietnamese social work.

CHAPTER 9

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

9.1 Introduction

This chapter draws together the threads of this research on international organisations and social work service professionalisation for disadvantaged children in Vietnam. The research was conducted in the context where social work has been newly reintroduced and recognised by the national government since 2010. Therefore, professionalisation of services is in its infancy and facing many challenges. The central aims of this research were to address three main questions:

1. What is the relationship between international organisations and social work as demonstrated via their roles in the development of social work services for disadvantaged children in Vietnam?
2. How can such social work service models meet the needs of disadvantaged children appropriately and effectively? And,
3. To what extent can these models reflect the development of indigenous and authentic social work services for Vietnamese vulnerable children?

The findings are re-presented to address these questions in two ways. First, they show the ways in which key actors in the process see the development of professional social work in Vietnam and the effectiveness or otherwise of the models that are being created. Second, they reveal the need to develop indigenous and authentic Vietnamese social work profession and services for vulnerable people, especially disadvantaged children.

Structurally, the first section of this chapter discusses the findings to answer the research questions. It synthesises the analyses provided in the findings chapters and links them to the literature that was introduced in the earlier chapters. The second section draws out the research conclusions, which highlight the key implications for international literature and practice in Vietnam. The subsequent sections discuss the research limitations, suggestions for further research, and final remarks of the thesis.

9.2 Discussion of the Research Findings

Chapters 4-8 have presented findings about the current step of social work professionalisation in Vietnam, the influence of IOs especially through services for disadvantaged children, and this discussion highlights the importance of creating appropriate models of social work for the Vietnamese context.

9.2.1 Relationship between International Organisations and Social Work in Vietnam

As discussed in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, the literature shows that the social work profession has been internationalised largely through processes of colonisation and globalisation, and, to some degree by UN agencies and INGOs working in the area of development and social welfare (Cox & Pawar, 2006; Dominelli, 2012; Healy, 2008, 2012a, 2012b; Hugman, 2010b; Midlgey, 1981; Payne & Askeland, 2008). The reciprocal relationship between the social work profession and IOs was identified early in its professionalisation in the global North (Dominelli, 2012; Healy, 2012a; Hugman, 2010b; Libal & Harding, 2012; Mama, 2012; Midgley, 1997). Evidence for this continuing relationship is seen in this research. IO roles in the professionalisation of social work services for disadvantaged children in Vietnam were apparent through the professional empowerment and development of social work services for vulnerable children (see Figure 9.1 for more details about the IO empowerment process to LPs and communities).

9.2.1.1 Professional Empowerment

IO empowerment strategies leading to social work professionalisation are considered important IO contributions to professional development in Vietnam. Empowerment is a broad concept that is adopted in many social fields: in the feminist movement (Kreisberg, 1992), in public policy (Bacqué & Biewener, 2013), and in organisations (Duvall, 1999). In broad terms, the notion of empowerment is often concerned with people who are marginalised from the dominant group in society (Rappaport, 1990). It has been described as the process of “becoming powerful” (Adams, 1990, p. 1), as “expansion of freedom of choice and action to shape one’s life. It implies a person’s effective control over resources and decisions ... to exercise their decisionmaking

[decision making] power and effective control over resources is limited by their powerlessness ..." (Roy & Sideras, 2006, p. 12), or as "taking leadership, meeting specific needs or rationing resources" (Servian, 1996, p. 6). In social work, this concept is often understood in regard to the work with disadvantaged and marginalised individuals and communities. In this research, empowerment was defined as the way in which LPs and people in communities were able to gain professional knowledge, skills, and approaches in mastering the process of developing social work and its services.

First, it is evident that IOs were actively involved in awareness raising about social work as a profession. Chapter 4 (Section 4.3.1) revealed the importance of IO empowerment processes on changing local leaders' and people's perceptions about the profession, especially the need for social work services for vulnerable children. The participants highlighted IO key roles in conducting awareness raising activities. IOs conducted overseas study tours for local leaders and officials to broaden their knowledge and see social work professionals in many developed countries, as well as in countries, which share some common social, cultural, and political features. These key local people attended international and domestic conferences and workshops where they were engaged in professional knowledge and experience exchange. IOs also sent professional experts to work with local senior officers to help them understand the nature of the social work profession. Community members were provided public information sharing sessions about professional services and how these services could contribute to local wellbeing. Both IO and LP participants described how they have seen a gradual increase in community awareness about social work and how the profession can contribute in the lives of disadvantaged people.

Second, it emphasised the central role of IOs in professional capacity building for their LPs. Sections 4.3.2 and 4.4.3 in Chapter 4 presented the findings of IO capacity strengthening programs. Both IO and LP participants appreciated the way in which local professional capacity had been improved. This additional empowerment strategy from IOs helped LP officers, especially staff working at grassroots levels, improve their social work knowledge and skills. Many local participants confirmed the effectiveness

of these programs. Notably, they learned professional ways of helping vulnerable children. This added to professionalisation and addressed local professional weaknesses.

Third, improvements were recognisably recorded in local legislation and social policy development that supported the professionalisation of social work and promoted the development of services for disadvantaged children. Sections 4.4.1 and 4.4.2 provided concrete evidence for these improvements. Many laws related to child care and protection were revised and amended towards rights-based and professional approaches. For example, change occurred in protection, care, and education of children legislation, which stressed children's rights and professional approaches in providing care and protection for children, particularly children in difficult circumstances. In addition, many government decrees, circulars, and decisions in promoting the social work profession and its services for children have been issued with IO support. The government Project 32, issued in 2010, established a platform for the recognition and professionalisation of the social work profession in Vietnam. As a result, the social work job code and job descriptions were issued. Consequently, social work was included in the list of local professions. This impacted positively on professional training and human resource development in social work. In addition, evidence-based and bottom-up policy development, which challenges the old top-down policy planning approach, is being introduced. Many national programs in child welfare, such as the National Action Program for Children 2012-2020, the National Program for Child Care and Protection 2011-2015, and the National Program on Community-based Care for Children in Difficult Circumstances 2005-2010 were implemented.

In short, through a variety of empowerment activities, IOs have contributed to the improvement of local professional awareness and capacity. As assessed by the research participants (Section 4.2, Chapter 4), there were many issues and challenges in local professional perceptions, knowledge, and skills. With an appropriate empowerment approach, changes were created to support local legal and policy systems for the development of social work and services. In the context of professional internationalisation, the relationship between globalisation and empowerment via its

impact on the domestic institutions is visible (Roy & Sideras, 2006). So it can be argued that globalisation has influenced the development of the social work profession in Vietnam through IO empowerment processes, in which LPs are encouraged to become powerful.

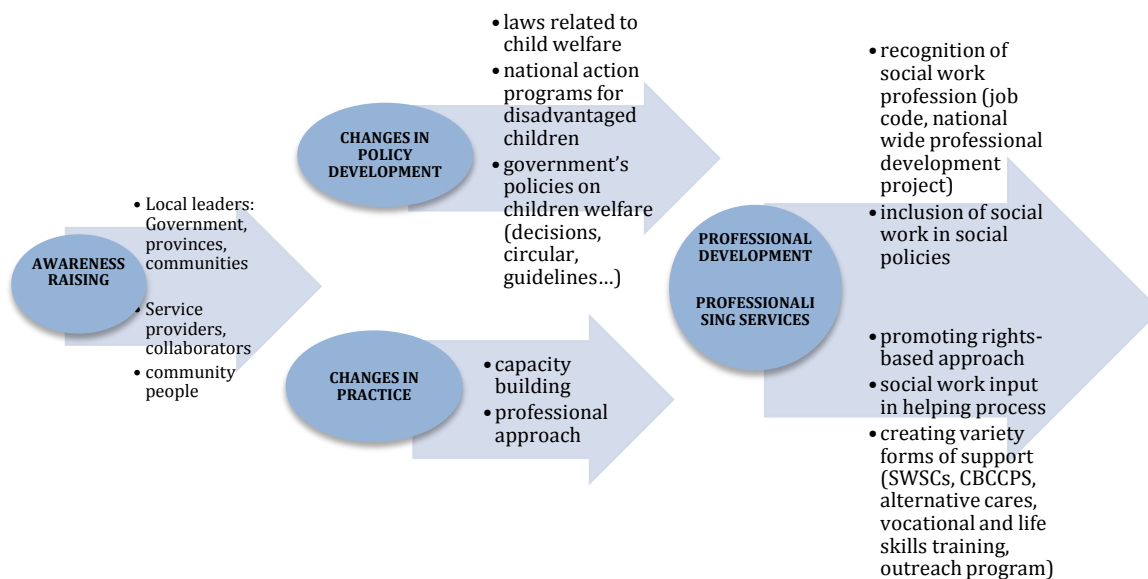


Figure 9.1: IO support in the professionalisation of social work services

This figure describes the IO empowerment process via professional awareness raising and capacity building as well as changes in policies and practices.

9.2.1.2 Development of Social Work Services

IO contributions were also acknowledged as helping LPs to deal with social problems arising from globalisation in the local context. Globalisation and structural adjustment impact on people's lives and create disparity (I. Ferguson et al., 2005). Sections 1.3.5 and 1.3.6.1, Chapter 1 discussed social challenges that Vietnamese people, particularly children were facing. It is observed that the changes in economic policies to a market-oriented paradigm have created pressure for a professional social protection system. Therefore, the development of professional services is seen as significant support for the locale in addressing consequences of globalisation and meeting the local needs.

Findings in Chapter 5 pointed to the perception of IOs and LPs in professionalising services by the ways in which social work values and principles were mainstreamed into services. A number of fundamental professional values and principles, such as 'rights-based', 'client-centred', 'starting where clients are', 'acceptance', and 'needs- and strengths-based' were gradually adopted throughout the process of service development. Noticeably, research participants valued this change in the local child care and protection field. In addition, with a variety professional service models, such as SWSCs, CBCCPS, alternative care, vocational and life skills training, and outreach programs, children, families and communities were welcome and gradually accepted the social work profession and services. This reaffirmed the contribution of IOs in social work professionalisation.

IOs participated in social work professionalisation, which supported local communities in solving problems caused by globalisation and economic integration. IOs have had a useful strategy in adopting social work interventions because social work can address the development gap caused by globalisation (M. Wilson, 2012). Indeed, it is also important to note that social work services have contributed to the success of IO programs.

9.2.1.3 Issues and Challenges in International Organisation and Social Work Relationship

There are empirical findings of mutual relationship between IOs in the development of the social work profession in Vietnam. However, it is also important to discuss the issues and challenges in this relationship. Chapter 2 reviewed the literature from previous studies on IOs' challenges in keeping their identity when faced with the agendas of the donors and their local counterparts (DiMaggio & Anheier, 1990; Fisher, 1997; Freddy, 2012; Schemeil, 2013). These issues included dilemmas in maintaining their values and intended roles, restrictions in accessing certain groups of vulnerable people, and limitations in setting their own agendas due to the donors' control of funding (Edwards & Hulme, 1996; Fisher, 1997; Iriye, 2002; Cox & Pawar, 2006). Furthermore, INGOs often face criticism of being political tools of states (Fisher, 1997; Barnett & Finnemore, 1999).

These difficulties were decoded in the research findings from Chapter 5: partially in Section 5.3, Chapter 6: Sections 6.3 and 6.4, and Chapter 7. The research reveals that there were external and internal factors that influenced IOs in the development of social work in Vietnam. These findings not only provided explanations for what the literature was suggesting, but also filled in gaps in the literature.

First, external influences noted in the literature were identified in this research. They were the donors' pressures and local environment and conditions. These pressures appear at times to have challenged IOs in keeping their own vision and missions as well as in implementing social work programs in some types of interventions and locations. The research indicates that IOs and LPs are aware of the risk of being driven by their donor and that these influences could combine with restrictions in types of work and access to locations preventing them from expanding social work services for certain groups.

Second, the most important findings of this research, which supplement the literature, were about the internal constraints of IOs and LPs: structural systems, international networking and cooperation, and equal IO and LP relationship. The issues of IO organisational and orientation changes, internal collaboration, and international expert challenges were recognised in the process of developing social work service programs. Moreover, LP factors, such as commitments and interests, limited local capacity, and internal LP cooperation, were obstacles to IO and LP professional developmental relationship. Hence, the question of how to keep an equal relationship between IOs and LPs is the key challenge for the promotion of IO involvement in developing social work services. Three concerns were identified in this respect: having appropriate perceptions about the power and control of sponsorship, sharing roles and responsibilities, and finding a common language that could contribute to IO and LP equality and address conflicts in their relationship. Thus, the story of the relationship between IOs, LPs, and social work professionalisation revolves around the utilisation of power and control and how to avoid the abuse of power of advantaged IOs over the disadvantaged LPs in the process of knowledge transfer.

Third, local political, social, and cultural environmental factors were identified as an influential in IO and social work relationship. As was mentioned in Chapter 1: Section

1.3.7, and Chapter 2: Section 2.6.2, social work was recently reintroduced in Vietnam, therefore, local awareness and understandings about the profession were seen to be weak. These factors also caused difficulties for IOs and LPs in the development of social work.

In summary, responding to the first research question, the research findings provided an empirical examination of IOs and social work development and added to existing knowledge. Participants believed that IOs have played important roles in the professionalisation of social work, particularly in creating changes in local professional awareness and recognition and local professional service systems in child care and protection. Inclusion, participation, respect, openness, and equality are fundamental principles in the developing mutually beneficial relationship between IOs and LPs in the social work professionalisation. IO programs were involved in a wide range of social work interventions, from micro activities, such as developing and providing professional services, to macro action in advocacy for social policies related to social work development. This assists in addressing the consequences of globalisation in the local context. However, it should be noted that the factors which influences the relationship between IOs and the promotion of social work are complex. They include both the internal dynamics of the IOs and the LPs and external factors, such as the local environment and globalisation, all of which can limit the effectiveness of particular strategies. Importantly, the question of balancing power and control in the relationship between IOs and LPs needs to be addressed cautiously in the quest to professionalise social work in a developing country in the Global South.

9.2.2 The Appropriateness and Effectiveness of International Organisation Service Models to the Needs of Disadvantaged Children

The second research question addressed whether IO service models were designed and implemented in response to the local needs and conditions. In the development of professional social work in Vietnam, the prevailing view has been that could be achieved by adopting rights-based and professional approaches. Literature on human rights in social work stresses the importance of a rights-based development of social work services for children (Ife, 2008; Link, 2012; Reichert, 2006, 2007, 2011; Staub-

Bernasconi, 2012; Wronka, 2012). Although Vietnam was the first country in Asia and the second in the world to ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1987), there remain issues and problems in adopting a rights-based approach in service development and delivery.

Findings presented in Chapter 4: Section 4.4.1, Chapter 5: Section 5.3, especially Chapter 6: Section 6.2 and Section 6.4.2, 6.4.3, 6.4.4 show how IO service programs were built through a process of assessing the local needs and adopting child rights for local disadvantaged children. The importance of having professional needs assessments was emphasised in making IO service programs appropriate to the local environment and local needs. Participants stressed the necessity of having LPs, local children, and community people participate in this process. Generally, IO service models employed a rights-based approach contributing to the establishment of services that met the best interests of children and the local needs.

However, there were concerns about how to have appropriate and effective services for disadvantaged children. Chapter 7, Section 7.3.1 raised the issues of different perceptions of how to apply child rights in practice. There have been conflicts regarding how to integrate rights into services for children and their families due to different understandings of rights between local people and IOs. Ensuring children's rights whilst at the same time respecting local values is a critical aspect of evaluating service models and their appropriateness and effectiveness in meeting local needs. Thus, relevant strategies need to be developed to address this international and local struggle in opening to professional values that benefit local children, families, and communities.

In short, a common message throughout the findings was the necessity of meeting the local needs. A combined needs- and rights-based approach was widely regarded by participants as effective in the development of social work services. Significantly, it was also seen as important to service programs' success and sustainability. Nonetheless, it is also evident that there are differences and resistances in the application of children's rights in the local context. Therefore, it is necessary that IOs and LPs should take into consideration how to resolve these challenges in order to develop professional services for local vulnerable children.

9.2.3 The Development of Indigenous and Authentic Social Work Services for Vulnerable Vietnamese Children

The central findings of this research focused on the development of an indigenous and authentic social work profession with indigenised services for disadvantaged children in Vietnam. The importance of “Vietnamising” social work and its services in the process of professionalisation was highlighted by the research participants. This section analyses how the concepts of indigenisation and authentisation are operationalised in the Vietnamese context. First, it presents an overview of professional imperialism then discusses indigenisation and authentisation.

9.2.3.1 Professional Imperialism

The discussion of *professional imperialism* and *Western hegemony* in the social work profession, as noted in Chapter 3, is a concerning issue in the international development of the social work profession (Brydon, 2012; Healy, 2012a; Midgley, 1981). Recently, it has been much criticised in social work education and practice (Brydon, 2012; Haug, 2005; Hugman, 2010b; Hugman, Moosa-Mitha, & Moyo, 2010; Tsang & Yan, 2001; Yan & Cheung, 2006; Yip, 2005a). This concept needs to be examined in the process of social work indigenisation and authentisation in countries in the global South.

Haug (2005) discusses the notion of an international social work discourse and explains:

In view of the professional imperialism under which the dominant model of social work has been disseminated around the world, it seemed inappropriate to speak of mutual exchange without first acknowledging and compensating for the imbalance of power relationships between knowledge systems, geo-political regions, languages and social work paradigms. (p. 127)

This argument is also analysed by Yip (2005a) in his critique of the IASSW and IFSW’s global qualifying standards for social work education which, for him, propose a Eurocentric social work practice. Therefore, he states, these global standards lead to Western social work imperialism and domination of Asian and other non-English speaking countries. Yip puts forward a four-fold model of globalisation and the exchange of social work each of which has a different degree of flexibility. These are:

Universal Components and Applicability, Universal Components but Mild Diversity in Applicability, Universal Components but Diversity in Applicability, and Diversity in Components and Applicability (Yip, 2005a, pp. 599-600). Taking social work education and practice in China as an illustration, he suggests that the way forward should be:

a dynamic exchange attitude in respecting the fundamental cultural difference in non-Eurocentric countries. That means not only non-Eurocentric countries should respect western ideologies such as rights, equality, empowerment, and social change, but also the Eurocentric countries should respect the eastern ideologies such as responsibility, collectivity, social norms and relation in social work practice and social work education. (Yip, 2005a, p. 610)

Additionally, when analysing indigenisation of social work education in China, Yan and Cheung (2006) note the importance of the discourses of “meanings and actions ” (p. 64), as well as “dominant social configuration” (p. 65). They state that in order to counter professional imperialism, “we should be cautious not to intrude into the recontextualization process” (p. 78), which they believe that avoiding interference from outsiders in the process of indigenisation is necessary for developing social work in China.

This concern was embedded in participants’ comments about the dominance of overseas professional knowledge and service models upon the local communities through IO service programs. Keeping an equal relationship between IOs and LPs, as well as strengthening LP capacity, was stressed by participants as essential to prevent what the literature has termed *professional imperialism* (see Sections 4.3, 6.4, 7.3, 7.4). As Healy (2012a) says about “uncritical export of social work concepts” and “superior–inferior” based relationship that will cause negative consequences to the professional internationalisation (p. 13). Thus, the approach of indigenisation and authentisation encourages the Vietnam social work system to stand on its own feet. The key issue here is how to enable the professionalisation of social work in Vietnam, which is “related to the capacity of social work knowledge to develop appropriately, with relevant methods and values, using cultural diversity as the model for analysis” (Hugman, 1996, p. 132). This, of course, is not only an IO interest, but also needs LP attention to building their capacity. It is also a question of power and control of different stakeholders participating in professionalisation. In this study, they include the IOs, LPs, international experts, and local people, including disadvantaged children.

Each of the parties should play their appropriate roles in an equilibrium state where they work 'with' rather than 'for' or 'upon' others. Building such a Vietnamese social work with its own identity and characteristics is discussed in the following sections.

9.2.3.2 Social Work Indigenisation in Vietnam

The concept of indigenisation in social work has attracted attention from professional scholars and practitioners in the era of international social work expansion from the global North to the global South, particularly in Asia and China (Hugman, 2010b; Lan et al., 2010; Law & Lee, 2014; Midgley, 1981; Yan, 1998, 2013; Yan & Cheung, 2006; Yan & Tsang, 2005, 2008; Yip, 2005a, 2005b, 2006; Yunong & Xiong, 2008). In the social work literature, there are two ways of conceptualising indigenisation. The first concerns the development of social work in non-Western and developing countries that fit the local social, political, cultural, and environmental context (K. M. Ferguson, 2005; Hugman, 2010b; Law & Lee, 2014; Gray & Coates, 2010; Midgley, 1981; Walton & Abo El Nasr, 1988; Yan, 1998, 2013; Yan & Cheung, 2006; Yan & Tsang, 2005, 2008; Yip, 2005a, 2005b, 2006; Yunong & Xiong, 2008). The second focuses on how to provide social work services for Indigenous (Aboriginal or First Nations, or Native) peoples, such as in Australia, the USA, or Canada (Briskman, 2007; Gray et al., 2008; Green & Baldry, 2008; Weaver, 1999). Indigenisation in this research, is defined as the way in which Western social work values, knowledge, and skills are contextualised to suite the local economic, cultural, political, social, and environmental context.

This is perceived as a process of understanding the local context, making appropriate adjustments, and mainstreaming into local structural systems (see Figure 9.2).

Research findings in Chapter 8 clearly identify the need for Vietnamising the social work profession in Viet Nam and its services for disadvantaged children by analysing the following key aspects: cultural relevance, context appropriateness, and localisation. This is particularly important that at this early professional developmental stage when Vietnam is struggling to find its own way of professionalisation.

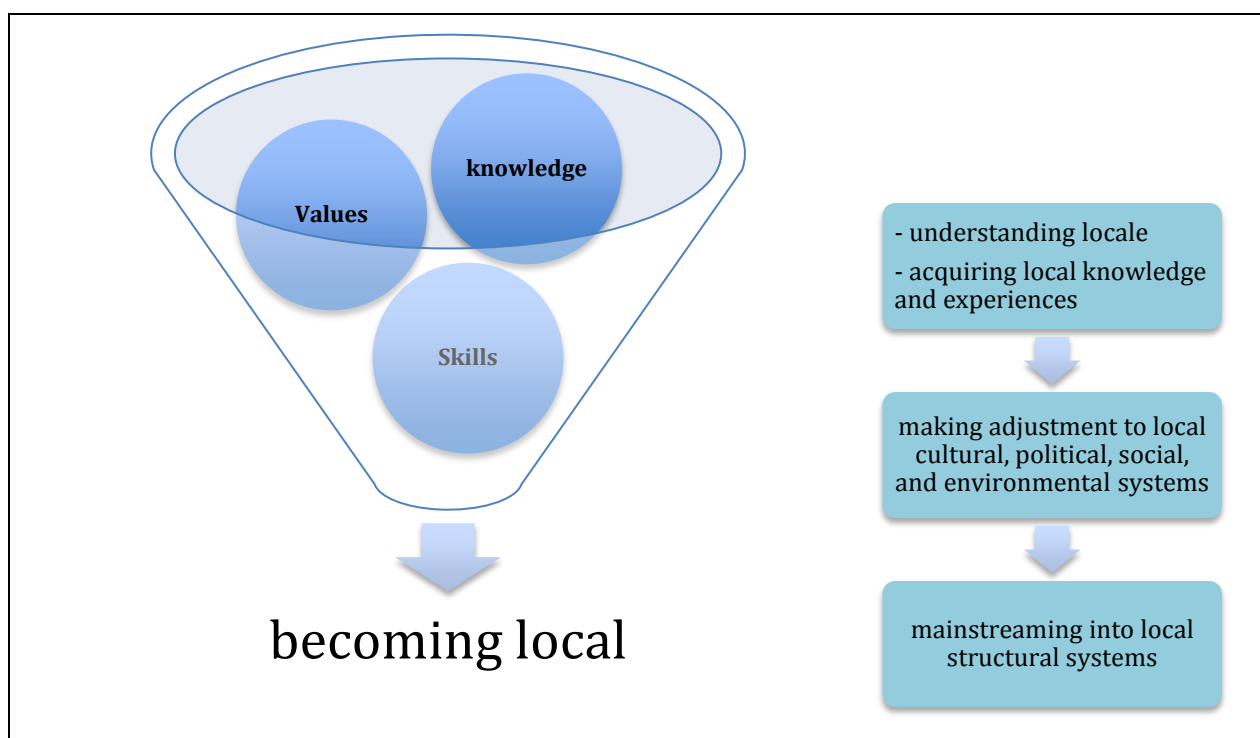


Figure 9.2: Process of indigenisation of the social work profession and services in Vietnam

(1) Findings in Section 8.2, Chapter 8 show the importance of cultures in the indigenisation of social work in Vietnam. As noted in Chapter 1, Vietnamese cultures are strongly influenced by Confucian ideology. This stresses the moral value of the society, ethical virtues and a hierarchical order (Sử, 2011; Taylor, 2004; Vân, 2014; Yao, 2003). These cultural characteristics influenced the formation of indigenous cultures, which were different from the Western cultures. Respecting and valuing local customs and traditions is crucial for contextualising social work in Vietnam. The first and foremost thinking was to develop self-awareness about local fundamental cultural features when adopting social work into any country in the global South. Participants recommended appropriate usage and promotion of local traditions in serving their people, in this case, disadvantaged children. The research also found widespread recognition among participants of taking into consideration the family and the communal cultural habit of providing care for orphaned children within the extended families and community environment.

Nevertheless, it also raised the question of having a critical cultural application in the operation of new professional services. For example, participants mentioned the limitations in cultures that prevented the development of social work services, such as rights-based services, foster care, adoption, and counselling. This cultural resistance should be challenged because “no cultural tradition is absolute” (Brydon, 2012, p. 163).

(2) Context appropriateness is considered an essential component of social work indigenisation (Brydon, 2012; Hugman, 2010b; Gray & Coates, 2010; Midgley, 1981; Walton & Abo El Nasr, 1988; Yan, 1998, 2013; Yan & Cheung, 2006; Yan & Tsang, 2005, 2008; Yip, 2005a, 2005b, 2006). It is applicable to indigenise social work in Vietnam. Section 8.3 in Chapter 8 emphasised that context suitability was vital to the professionalisation of social work services for vulnerable children. It is particularly important in a highly ordered society like Vietnam, in which the system is operated and managed from central to communal levels. That explains the pressing need for a thoughtful consideration of the local context, and the local developmental level and conditions, particularly the local orientations, policies, and political systems. Moreover, the striking finding of this research is that the Vietnamese social work model must be reflected in the local political structure. This ensures the success as well as the sustainability of social work services. As such, IOs and LPs should give consideration to how to make social work services ‘flux into’ the local context.

Nonetheless, the research findings also emphasise the necessity of keeping a balance with the local capacity and conditions so that social work services can be contextualised harmoniously. The indigenisation process should start where the locale is. Moreover, knowing the strengths and weaknesses of the local structural system is useful for IOs and LPs in their service professionalisation. Working at the macro level with an appropriate advocacy approach should be included in the agenda of the social work professionalisation.

(3) Localising or ‘becoming local’ is the aim of indigenisation. Findings in Section 8.4 Chapter 8 introduced a process of localisation, which required making proper adjustment, mobilising indigenous knowledge and experiences as well as defining Vietnamese social work identity. As shown in literature, the process of indigenisation in other developing countries is varied and based on their own cultural, economic,

social, and political characteristics. The process in Vietnam also appears to be reflecting local features. This process stresses the need for relevant modification of social work knowledge and services to suit the local children's and their families' needs and circumstances, social policies as well as operational conditions. However, a concern of how to make appropriate adjustment to the local context, but still keep the quality of professional services, was raised. Even though using international models of social work may lead to a perception that Western social work constitutes a universal ideal (Gray, 2005; Midlgey, 1981; Yip, 2005a, 2005b), it is useful to draw on social work in Western countries (Payne & Askeland, 2008; Yan, 2013). This research suggests the need for a wise selection and adaptation of professional values, knowledge, and skills into Vietnamese context with suitable modification. This knowledge transfer process needed to be conducted in a professional manner, in which both IOs and LPs had capacity to think critically about what were appropriate and what were not. For example, if IOs put too much focus on one professional aspect over another, such as the over-emphasis of 'case management', this may cause a misunderstanding that case management is the only social work practice and that if a person finishes a training course on just this topic, he/she would be a social worker.

In addition, to Vietnamising social work, it is important to take into consideration the "merits of indigenized knowledge ... as well as the merits of existing knowledge and approaches, with a view to blending both paradigms into the local setting" (Reichert, 2011, p. 158). The research outcomes demonstrated the importance of acquiring local knowledge and local involvement in the indigenisation process.

In short, professional indigenisation emerged as an important issue challenging the development of the social work profession and its services for disadvantaged children in Vietnam. There are important factors that both IOs and LPs should pay attention to: the local cultures, the local context, and flexibility in adapting to local capacity and conditions, and attainment of local knowledge. Another important issue of indigenisation is ensuring local professional quality conforms to international standards.

9.2.3.3 Developing Authentic Social Work Profession in Vietnam

Authentisation is identified as the final phase (phase III) of social work indigenisation by Walton and Abo El Nasr (1988). They describe authentisation as “the creation or building of a domestic model of social work in the light of the social, cultural, political and economic characteristics of a particular country” (Walton & Abo El Nasr, 1988, p. 149). Participants in this research call for the establishment of authentic social work by defining a Vietnamese professional social work identity. The authentisation of social work in Vietnam needs to address the following questions: What are the people’s wellbeing and their lives and the way in which they want their lives to be? And what do they need? Thus, authentic Vietnamese social work should be built based on the three key factors: indigenous cultures, indigenous knowledge, and especially indigenous context of local problems and needs and political, economic, and social systems (see Figure 9.3).

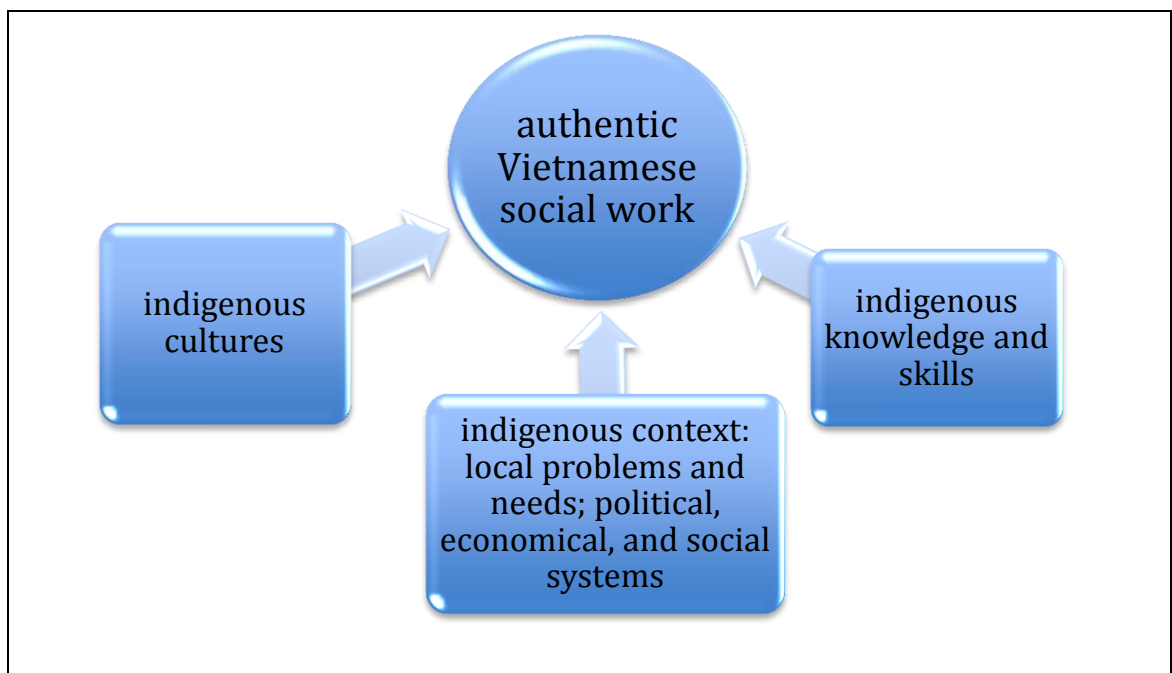


Figure 9.3: Authentic Vietnamese social work

Moreover, authentisation should start by building authentic social work education (developing its own technical terms and knowledge) as well as practice. The authentisation of social work in Vietnam refers to how social work professionalisation

is conducted and “has been shaped by the types of knowledge and contingent skills claimed by social workers” (Hugman, 1996, p. 133).

In summary, sharing some similarities with other models of indigenisation and authentisation in other developing countries such as Egypt, India, and particularly China, Vietnamese social work indigenisation and authentisation is seen through this research as requiring a focus on three key factors: cultural relevance, context appropriateness, and acquiring local knowledge and skills. However, there are differences in approaches to indigenisation in various countries. As social work cannot be separated from politics (Gray & Fook, 2004; Tsang & Yan, 2001; Yan, 2013; Yan & Tsang, 2005) and it is socially constructed (Yan, 1998; Payne, 1991), as noted by participants and observed by the researcher, Vietnamising social work requires special attention to Vietnamese political and social organisational systems. Payne and Askeland (2008) summarise this position clearly when they say of social work indigenisation:

Western social work is not necessarily relevant to non-Western countries and its relevance should always be challenged. ... Should be influenced by non-Western social work, which will inevitably have different values and practices. [And] non-Western countries should and do create their own social work... (p.4)

Therefore, developing the autonomy of an authentic social work in the process of professionalisation is important to Vietnamising this profession. Vietnamese social work must learn to deal with its social problems and to meet local needs.

9.3 Implications

There are three primary implications of this research for theory, research, and practice.

9.3.1 Theoretical Implications

At the international level, this research fills some gaps in knowledge about the relationship between IOs and the social work profession, particularly in professionalisation in the context of a developing country in the South. It reinforces the premise that there is reciprocal relationship between IOs and the social work profession, as seen in this national context. IOs play important roles in the promotion

and expansion of social work while social work services help IOs implement their programs effectively for local vulnerable people and communities. This enables the professionalisation of social work in a non-Western developing country. In addition, it supplements an emerging theoretical base for Vietnam's professionalisation of social work and its services in child care and protection. It also partially contributes to the existing literature of indigenisation and authentisation in the process of social work internationalisation in countries in the global South.

9.3.2 Implications for Research

This research also opens space for further empirical examination in relation to social work and IOs in the professionalisation of services in a developing country where social work has been recently recognised as a profession. Significantly, it is pioneer research about IOs and the professionalisation of social work and its services for vulnerable people in Vietnam. It calls for more in-depth research to be undertaken exploring social work professionalisation and development of indigenous and authentic services for vulnerable groups in a local context.

9.3.3 Implications for Practice

This has important implications for the development of social work and its services for vulnerable children in Vietnam. First, the findings will be relevant for the Vietnamese national project on the development of social work. It provides critical ideas for the Vietnamese government in its efforts in finalising the legal system and social policies to meet the best interests of children based on a combination of needs and rights. Additionally, it suggests that the local government should pay attention to building a systematic cooperative mechanism to facilitate IO involvement as well as local networking. Noticeably, it has contributed to raising local professional awareness that social work is an evidence-based profession. Second, the research is timely in advocating for appropriate social work professionalisation through the building of an indigenous and authentic social work profession and services. Third, it has recommended that the process of indigenisation and authentisation should be initiated in education and practice. In education, it is necessary to pay attention to

building Vietnamese social work curricula and materials. In practice, it is important to develop professional service models, which fit the local cultural, economic, social, political, and environmental context. Finally, it informs IOs in making their support and investment appropriate and effective.

9.4 Limitations of the Study

This is the first empirical study of social work professionalisation in Vietnam through examining IOs and the professionalisation of social work services for disadvantaged children. It contains several limitations. As mentioned in Chapter 3, Section 3.6, the scope and unpredictable nature of qualitative research and case study limits the level of generalisation of the research findings.

Certain factors impacted on the data collection. First, because social work has been reintroduced recently into Vietnam, there is a lack of local understanding about the profession as well as professional terms. For example, the term ‘social worker’ translated into Vietnamese is “nhân viên công tác xã hội”. But this has different meanings. In Vietnam, if one does ‘social work’ [in Vietnamese “làm công tác xã hội”], historically that is automatically understood as doing charity work.

The second problem is one of translation. Initially, in-depth interviews were conducted in Vietnamese, and then translated into English for data analysis and the discussions of findings. Hence, there is possible limitation in equivalences of meaning between English and Vietnamese.

Lastly, the constraint presented by the exploration of the relationship between IOs (the sponsors) and LPs (receiving support) may prevent the research participants sharing their objective perspective because they may be afraid of causing offences that could influence their cooperation. This effectively replicates the problem faced by IOs themselves in their relationship with international donors.

9.5 Future Research

During my studying journey on this thesis, I found that much still remains to be explored in this emerging field of study, especially in Vietnam. There are a number of potential areas of future research. First, the most obvious is to investigate in more

detail the process of social work indigenisation and authentisation in Vietnam. There is a clear need to propose a practical model to help Vietnam to build a social work profession with its own identity and characteristics.

Second, studies of how the professionalisation of social work will influence or benefit the lives of Vietnamese vulnerable people is needed. Such research would contribute not only to greater understanding but also to practical considerations of how social work and its services can be developed and implemented.

Third, there are wider questions that still need to be unpacked in professional indigenisation in Vietnam, such as the roles of cultures, political system, and social structures and how those factors contribute to Vietnamising this profession.

Finally, there is a broader potential for studies of this kind to contribute to research on international social work, particularly cross-cultural research on professional imperialism and how to introduce the profession appropriately to countries of the global South.

9.6 Final Remarks: A Personal Reflection

Social work development in Vietnam is at an early stage of professionalisation and integration into the profession internationally. There are challenges and many things that need to be carried out to help Vietnam build its own social work profession and services to address the Vietnamese social problems and to meet the needs of local people, especially disadvantaged and marginalised groups. Indeed, much effort needs to go into how to support Vietnam to achieve greater independence. This research calls for further international collaboration as well as having local responsibility in building indigenous and authentic social work in Vietnam. It looks forward to an independent Vietnamese social work and to its integration into the international social work community. I am very happy and feel some responsibility to be part of this professionalisation in Vietnam.

Having been born and growing up in a rural area in Vietnam, I had lived experiences of witnessing the hardships of people living in poverty and disadvantage. My biggest dream when I was a child was how to contribute, even in a very small way, to helping people in these circumstances. I have been fortunate to have opportunities to make

this dream become true when I participated as a national United Nations volunteer in a project “Providing psychosocial support for vulnerable people in Vietnam” in the late 1990s. Then I was able to go further in my own journey to become a social work educator and practitioner. The four-year exploration presented in this thesis has given me a good opportunity to begin the next stage of my professional career. It is a very important milestone that allows me to contribute further to the development of the social work profession in Vietnam and, particularly, in supporting vulnerable people, especially disadvantaged children. A lot of challenges are ahead for social work professionalisation in Vietnam and for Vietnamese social work professionals, particularly for a young social worker educator and practitioner like me. Nonetheless, it is my belief that “có công mài sắt, có ngày nên kim” [diligence is the mother of good fortune], with my commitment and my love to the social work profession, I can overcome these challenges and assist in building a Vietnamese social work to join the professional regional and international community.

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Note: Vietnamese names do not have the same English name order (first name, surname); I therefore, used the order as indicated in the articles for Vietnamese authors.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Key Historical Development of Social Work in Vietnam

Time	Milestones of social work development in Vietnam
The pre-French colony (Before 1862)	<p>In the Đinh, Lý and Nguyễn Dynasties, the Feudal government had imposed a policy of sharing food by the rich to the poor and promoting self-management and mutual solidarity in the community. It also introduced rules and regulations to punish those involved in social problems, such as gambling, drinking, and drug use. In short, in the pre-French colony, the nature of helping activity was based on the commune culture where people in the village provided assistance to each other when someone was in a difficult situation.</p>
The colonial French and neo-colonial American periods	<p>The colony of the French was from 1862 to 1945 in the north and from 1862 to 1954 in the south of Vietnam. During this period, there were very important developmental steps in the social work profession:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The introduction institutional care model set up by the Catholic Missionaries for orphaned children, patients, the elderly, and the disabled. - The establishment of a network among the youth, students, and workers, which called for cooperation in mutual support and was initiated by the communists. - Professional social work was introduced in the period from 1945 to 1954 in the south of Vietnam: the establishment of the government directorate for social welfare and Caritas school of Social Work in 1947 by the French Red Cross then handed to Daughters of Charity. - The establishment of non-government organisations, such as Catholic Relief Services, Cooperation for American Relief Everywhere, and International Rescue Community to organise relief and settlement activities for the refugees in the southward exodus under the neo-colony of the Americans. - Foundation of social work training institutions: Vietnam Army School of Social Work in 1957 managed by Caritas that offered a two year program and short-term courses and the establishment of Buddhist Youth School for Social Services, which introduced the Philippines model of rural development. - National School of Social work was created with the cooperative efforts between the Vietnamese Ministry of Social Welfare, United Nations Development Program, United Nations Children’s Fund, and other United Nations Agencies in 1968. It provided training for trainers for two years for graduates and BAs in Social Science for non-graduates. This School was in operation till 1975. In addition, social work was also introduced as a discipline at Da Lat University and ready to start in Van Hanh University in Sai Gon. In 1975, Vietnam won the revolution and the north and the south united.

The socialist period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Socialist period started from 1945 in the north and 1975 in the whole country. Though it is considered that there was no professional social work during this time, supportive activities were carried out by the mass organisations and government bodies, such as the Ministry of Social Affairs and in its system layered from commune to central level. People's lives were taken care of by many stakeholders, such as the government, social mass organizations and people in the community themselves. - There were short-term training programs for staff working in the area of social affairs during this time, though these only focused on social policies and decrees on social relief.
After the introduction of the 'Renovation' economic policy (from 1986)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Late 1980s there were short-term training courses in social work conducted with the support from international organisations (UNICEF, UNV, Save the Children Sweden, etc.). - In 1992 two-year course in Saigon and a four-year bachelor in Women Studies, specialising in Social work. - In 1997 three year course in Hanoi at the College of Labour and Social Affairs. - Most social service programmes were under the umbrella of social protection. Social services in Vietnam focus on two main aspects: (1) protection for the poor, the disabled, children in need of special protection, unsupported elderly, and people with HIV/AIDS, and (2) social problems, such as drug abuse and sex work. - In 2004, a training code with core curricula for both the undergraduate (a four-year training program) and college levels (a three-year training program) were issued by the Ministry of Education and Training. These social work curricula were revised in 2010. - On the 25th of March 2010, the government approved a National Project on the Development of the Social Work Profession 2010-2020. - A job code for social workers was granted by the Ministry of Home Affairs, which assigned three job titles: Senior social worker (job code: 24.291); Social worker (university and college degree, job code: 24.292); and Associate social worker (Technical Secondary diploma: job code: 24.293) - In 2013, a professional standard for social work collaborators working at the commune/ward/town level, the lowest level of professional practice in the administrative system. - From 2000 up to now: professional services have been gradually introduced in many forms, such as social work service centres, alternative care (adoption, foster care, social homes, and so forth), community-based care, and social entrepreneurs.

Appendix B: National Social Work Core Curricula for University and College levels

I. National core curriculum for university level (four-year program)

No.	Subjects	Credits
I	General knowledge	36
1.	Marxist – Leninist	6
2.	Ho Chi Minh's Ideology	4
3.	Socialist Science	4
4.	History of Vietnamese Communist Party	4
5.	Ho Chi Minh's Ideology	3
6.	Computer science	4
7.	English	10
8.	Physical training	4
9.	National defence training	9
II	Knowledge of professional education	85
II.1	Basic knowledge of Major Block	19
10.	History of Human civilization	3
11.	General Vietnam Culture	3
12.	Laws	3
13.	Logic sturdy	3
14.	Psychology	3
15.	Sociology	4
II.2	Basic knowledge of Major	28
16.	Development knowledge	3
17.	Social anthropology	3
18.	Public health	3
19.	Gender and Development	3
20.	Family study	3
21.	Research Methods	4
22.	Social psychology	3
23.	Development psychology	3
24.	Human behaviour and environment	3
II.3	Major knowledge	38
25.	Introduction to Social work	3
26.	Social work with individuals	3
27.	Social work with groups	3

28.	Community Development	4
29.	Field work (social work with individuals)	6
30.	Field work (social work with groups)	6
31.	Social Welfare and social affairs	4
32.	Social policy	3
33.	Counselling	3
34.	Social work administration	3

II. National core curriculum for college level (three-year program)

No.	Subjects	Credits
I	General knowledge	34
1.	Marxist - Leninist	4
2.	Ho Chi Minh's Ideology	4
3.	Socialist Science	3
4.	History of Vietnamese Communist Party	3
5.	Ho Chi Minh's Ideology	3
6.	Computer science	4
7.	English	10
8.	Statistics	3
9.	Physical training	4
10.	National defense training	7
II	Knowledge of professional education	62
II.1	Basic knowledge of Major Block	12
11.	Population and environment	2
12.	Ethnography	2
13.	Vietnamese culture	2
14.	Psychology	3
15.	Sociology	3
II.2	Basic knowledge of Major	13
16.	Development psychology	2
17.	Communication	2
18.	Gender and Development	2
19.	Laws	3
20.	Human behavior and environment	4

II.3	Major knowledge	37
21.	Social policy	2
22.	Social Welfare	3
23.	Introduction to Social work	3
24.	Social work with individuals and groups	6
25.	Community Development	3
26.	Field work (social work with individuals)	6
27.	Field work (community development)	6
28.	Counseling	3
29.	Social work administration	3

Appendix C: Social Workers' Job Codes

Position	Functions	Main tasks	Qualification requirements
Senior social worker	helping the organisation leaders to manage, provide directions and guidance, and to carry out social work activities that required advanced theoretical and practical skill support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - managing the screening and admission of clients - conducting assessments on clients' psychological, physical, health and their families as well as the needs for social work services - responsible for designing care plan for clients - providing social work services which requires high complex level of theoretical, methodological, and practical skills, such as counselling, therapy, education, contract, reconciliation, and communication - in charge in supervising and evaluating intervention activities - adjusting the care plan if necessary - in charge in data collection, consolidating, analysing, and foreseeing the clients' progress - organising terminating care plan and community integration - in charge of evaluating and drawing experiences on assigned social work tasks, providing suggestions for changes on standard adjustment and social work procedure - in charge or participating in social work studies and research - providing consultation for short and long term strategies, projects, and plans on developing social work services, and - participating in writing social work curriculum, textbooks, and professional training for social workers and collaborators. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - having a bachelor or higher degree in social work, sociology, psychology or related social sciences - being able to use a foreign language from B to higher level in his/her professional activities - having B level of computer utilisation (mastering the Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, Internet) - having the professional certificate set by the MOLISA, and - having nine or more years of experience at the position of social worker.
Social worker	is an official in charge of social work, in charge of carrying out or providing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - screening and admission clients - conducting assessments on clients' psychology, physical, health, families and needs for social work services - designing care plan for clients - providing direct social work services which requires at the basic level of using 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - having a bachelor or higher degree in social work, sociology, psychology or related social sciences - being able to use a foreign

	guidance to conduct social work activities which requires professional basic theoretical, method, and practical skills.	<p>theory, method and practical skills, such as counselling, therapy, education, contract, reconciliation, and communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - supervising and evaluating intervention activities - adjusting the care plan if necessary - designing the clients' termination plan and community integration - collecting data, consolidating, analysing and foreseeing the clients' progress - evaluating and drawing experiences on the assigned social work tasks - providing suggestions for changes on standard adjustment and social work procedure - participating in social work studies and research within assigned tasks; - Participating in writing social work materials, and - providing guidelines for social workers and social work staff in the agency within his/her appropriate training field. 	<p>language from B to higher level in his/her professional activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - having B level of computer utilisation (mastering the Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, Internet), and - having the professional certificate set by the MOLISA.
Junior social work staff	is an official in charge of social work, in charge of carrying out some certain professional social work procedure, which requires simple professional theoretical, method, and practical skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - participating in the procedure of clients' screening and admission - conducting assessments on clients 'psychology, physical, health, families and needs for social work services as being assigned - providing suggestions and directly carrying out care plan for clients and group of clients within his/her certain assigned tasks - providing social work services which requires at the simple level of theory, methods and practical skills such as counselling, therapy, education, contract, reconciliation and communication within his/her assigned tasks - participating in evaluating intervention activities and providing suggestions for adjusting the care plan if necessary as being assigned - participating in designing the clients' termination plan as being assigned - participating in data collection, consolidating, analysing and foreseeing the clients' progress and provide relevant solutions within his/her assigned tasks, and - directly in charge in fulfilling some assigned social work methods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - graduated at vocational training program in social work, sociology, psychology or related social sciences - having A level of computer utilisation (mastering the Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, Internet) - having the professional certificate set by the MOLISA, and - being able to use a foreign language at A level.

Appendix D: Semi-structured Interview Guides

I. Semi-structured Interview Guides for Participants from International Organisations

1. What is your professional title?
2. How long have you been working in this organisation and at this position?
3. What are your professional qualifications?
4. What are your institution's social work services?
5. What types of disadvantaged children are your institution targets at?
6. How long have those services been providing to disadvantaged children?
7. What were the factors taken into account when these social services were developed?
8. How were those services first introduced? And have there been any changes since the implementation?
9. What kinds of activities does your institution set up with the local partners?
10. How do you assess the achievements of these services?
11. How often are these services being evaluated? And by which methods?
12. What are the most important factors to make the success for applying a social work service for disadvantaged children?
13. What are the challenges that you and your institution have to encounter during the provision of social services?
14. What do you think about the appropriateness of the available service programs?
15. If you could make better changes, what are they? And your suggestions for introducing these new initiatives?
16. What is your expectation for the better services that meet the need of vulnerable children in Vietnam?
17. How do you see the further development of social work in Vietnam?
18. Do you have any additional comments?

II. Semi-structured Interview Guides for Participants from Local Partners

1. What is your professional title?
2. How long have you been working in this organisation and at this position?
3. What are your professional qualifications?
4. What social work services are you involved in? And for how long?
5. What are the roles of your organisation in these services?
6. What types of disadvantaged children are your institution targets at?
7. How long have those services been providing to disadvantaged children?
8. How were those services introduced?
9. How do you assess the achievements of these services?
10. How often are these services being evaluated? And by which methods?
11. What are the most important factors to make the success for applying a social work service for disadvantaged children?
12. What are the challenges that you and your institution as the local partner of international organisation have to encounter during the provision of social services?
13. How do you organisation overcome the difficulties in the cooperative partnership with international organisation(s)?

14. What do you think about the appropriateness of the available service programs?
15. If you could make better changes, what are they? And your suggestions for introducing these new initiatives?
16. What is your expectation for the better services that meet the need of vulnerable children in Vietnam?
17. How do you see the further development of social work in Vietnam?
18. Do you have any additional comments?

III. Semi-structured for Focus Group Discussions

Welcome introduction

1. What are the social service programs you are participating in?
2. How long have you been in these programs?
3. How were you recruited in the programs?
4. Can you describe the programs you are participating in?
5. What are the most interesting parts of the programs?
6. What have you gained from participating in these programs?
7. What are the things that you want to be changed?
8. Can you provide your suggestions for changes?
9. Could you please tell me about your dreams for better services?
10. Do you have any additional comments?

Appendix E: Participant Information and Consent Form

I. Participant Information and Consent Form for In-depth Interviewees



Approval No: 110 59

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT

(International organisations and their contributions to the development of social work services for disadvantaged children in Vietnam)

Participant selection and purpose of study

You are invited to participate in a study titled "*International organisations and their contributions to the development of social work services for disadvantaged children in Vietnam*". We (Ms. Nguyen Thi Thai Lan, a PHD candidate, Prof. Richard Hugman, the supervisor) from School of Social Sciences and International Studies, the University of New South Wales, Australia) hope to learn your insights and interpretations about the contributions of international organisations in the introduction of social work in Vietnam and especially of their social work service models providing for the disadvantaged children in Vietnam.

Description of study and risks

If you decide to participate, we will ask you to voluntarily take part in a 60 minute long one-to-one semi-structured interview at your advised convenient time and place. The purpose of the interview is to get your comments, insights, and experiences regarding international organisations' contributions to social work development in Vietnam, particularly in the provision of social work service models for disadvantaged children in Vietnam.

You will be asked to spend the whole 60-minute long being asked questions in the interview. This might cause some disruption to your routine work (for only 60 minutes).

With your consent, the interview will be recorded and transcribed for the purpose of research data collection and the transcription will be sent to you for your verification before it is translated into English and the data analysis is actually conducted. The recording is only for transcription purposes. Tapes and transcripts will be de-identified by labelling the same codes known only to the researcher. These same codes will be used to refer to any particular participant throughout the written component of the thesis.

You will get a copy of the verified transcript of the interview, the recorded audio file of the interview and be asked for your consent for using it for research data collection and data analysis purpose.

We cannot and do not guarantee or promise that you will receive any benefits from this study.

Confidentiality and disclosure of information

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission, except as required by law.

If you give us your permission by signing this document, we plan to discuss and publish the results to the journals' editors, other research scholars and thesis examiners in the forms of journal article and/or a thesis for the purpose of providing proof of evidence of data source and data validity. In any publication, information will be provided in such a way that you cannot be identified.

Complaints may be directed to the Ethics Secretariat, The University of New South Wales, SYDNEY 2052 AUSTRALIA (phone 9385 4234, fax 9385 6648, email ethics.sec@unsw.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be investigated promptly and you will be informed out the outcome.

Feedback to participants

At the completion of the study, a summary of the research findings will be offered to you via email or posted mail.

Your consent

Your decision whether or not to participate will not prejudice your future relations with the University of New South Wales. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue participation at any time without prejudice.

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask us. If you have any additional questions later, (*Ms. Nguyen Thi Thai Lan, phone: +62-0449862884 (in Sydney) or 84-437687984 (in Vietnam), email: lan.nguyen@student.unsw.edu.au; Prof. Richard Hugman, phone +62 02 9385 2778, email: r.hugman@unsw.edu.au from School of Social Sciences and International Studies, the University of New South Wales, Australia*) will be happy to answer them.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

CONSENT FORM

(International organisations and their contributions to the development of social work services for disadvantaged children in Vietnam)

1. I understand that the investigator will conduct this study in a manner conforming to the ethical and scientific principles set out by the University of New South Wales, Australia.
2. I acknowledge that I have read the **Information Statement**, which explains the aims of the research and other related information about the research.
3. Before signing this **Consent Form**, I have been given the opportunity to ask any questions relating to any possible physical and mental harm as a result of participation. I have received satisfactory answers to any questions that I have asked.
4. I understand that I can withdraw from the research at any time without prejudice to my relationship with The University of New South Wales or my organisation.
5. I agree that research data gathered from the results of the study may be published, provided that my name cannot be identified.
6. I understand that if I have any questions relating to my participation in this research, I will contact Nguyen Thi Thai Lan (+62-0449862884 *(in Sydney)* or 84-437687984 *(in Vietnam)* or Prof. Richard Hugman (+62 2 9385 2778) who will be happy to answer them.
7. Complaints may be directed to the Ethics Secretariat, The University of New South Wales, SYDNEY 2052 AUSTRALIA (phone: + 62 9385 4234, fax: +62 9385 6648, email ethics.sec@unsw.edu.au).
8. I acknowledge receipt of a copy of the Information Statement and Revocation of Consent form.

.....
Signature of Research Participant

.....
Signature of Witness

.....
(Please PRINT name)

.....
(Please PRINT name)

.....
Date

.....
Nature of Witness

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

REVOCATION OF CONSENT

*(International organisations and their contributions to the development of social work services
for disadvantaged children in Vietnam)*

I hereby wish to **WITHDRAW** my consent to participate in the research proposal described above
and understand that such withdrawal **WILL NOT** jeopardise any treatment or my relationship
with The University of New South Wales.

.....

Signature

.....

Date

.....

Please PRINT Name

The section for Revocation of Consent should be forwarded to (Ms. Nguyen Thi Thai Lan. Email:
lan.nguyen@student.unsw.edu.au, address: Nguyen Thi Thai Lan, University of Labour and Social
Affairs, 43 Tran Duy Hung, Hanoi, Vietnam).

II. Participant Information and Consent Form for Group Discussions



Approval No: 110 59

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT (for Children from 14 -16 years old)

*(International organisations and their contributions to the development of social work services
for disadvantaged children in Vietnam)*

Participant selection and purpose of study

You are invited to participate in a study titled "*International organisations and their contributions to the development of social work services for disadvantaged children in Vietnam*". We (Ms. Nguyen Thi Thai Lan, a PHD candidate, Prof. Richard Hugman, the supervisor) from School of Social Sciences and International Studies, the University of New South Wales, Australia) hope to learn your ideas and experiences about the contributions of international organisations in the introduction of social work in Vietnam and especially of their social work service models providing for the disadvantaged children in Vietnam.

Description of study and risks

If you decide to participate with your parent/guardian's consent, we will ask you to voluntarily take part in a 90 minute long group interview with other children at your advised convenient time and place. The purpose of the group interview is to get your experiences, comments, and assessments regarding to the international organisations' contributions to social work development in Vietnam, particularly in the provision of social work service models for disadvantaged children in Vietnam.

With you and your parent/guardian's consent, the group interview will be recorded and transcribed for the purpose of research data collection and the transcription will be sent to you for your verification before the data analysis is actually conducted. The recording is only for transcription purposes. Tapes and transcripts will be de-identified by labelling the same codes known only to the researcher. These same codes will be used to refer to any particular participant throughout the written component of the thesis.

You will get a copy of the verified transcript of the interview, the recorded audio file of the interview and be asked for consent for using it for research data collection and data analysis purpose.

There is a small possibility that you might be upset while sharing your feelings and experiences in receiving services. In that case you can talk to Dr. Mai, Director of Social Work Development Centre at the University of Labour and Social Affairs, 43 Tran Duy Hung, Hanoi, who is happy to take part in the group to provide support.

We cannot and do not guarantee or promise that you and your child will receive any benefits from this study.

Confidentiality and disclosure of information

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission, except as required by law.

If you and your parent/guardian give us permission by signing this document, we plan to discuss and publish the results to the journals' editors, other research scholars and thesis examiners in the forms of journal article and/or a thesis for the purpose of providing proof of evidence of data source and data validity. In any publication, information will be provided in such a way that you cannot be identified.

Complaints may be directed to the Ethics Secretariat, The University of New South Wales, SYDNEY 2052 AUSTRALIA (phone: +62 02 9385 4234, fax: +62 02 9385 6648, email ethics.sec@unsw.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be investigated promptly and you will be informed of the outcome.

Feedback to participants

At the completion of the study, a summary of the research findings will be offered to you via email or posted mail.

Your consent

Your and your parent/guardian's decision whether or not to agree to participate will not prejudice your and your parent/guardian's future relations with the University of New South Wales and the social service providers. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You and your parent/guardian are free to decide not to take part and can withdraw your consent and to discontinue participation at any time without prejudice.

If you are willing to participate in the study please sign the Consent form.

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask us. If you have any additional questions later, (Ms. Nguyen Thi Thai Lan, phone: +62 0449862884 (in Sydney) or + 84-437687984 (in Vietnam), email: lan.nguyen@student.unsw.edu.au; Prof. Richard Hugman, phone: +62 02 9385 2778, email: r.hugman@unsw.edu.au from School of Social Sciences and International Studies, the University of New South Wales, Australia) will be happy to answer them.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

CONSENT FORM

*(International organisations and their contributions to the development of social work services
for disadvantaged children in Vietnam)*

1. I understand that the investigator will conduct this study in a manner conforming to the ethical and scientific principles set out by the University of New South Wales, Australia.
2. I acknowledge that I have read the **Information Statement**, which explains the aims of the research and other related information about the research.
3. Before signing this **Consent Form**, I have been given the opportunity to ask any questions relating to any possible physical and mental harm as a result of participation. I have received satisfactory answers to any questions that I have asked.
4. I understand that I can withdraw from the research at any time without prejudice to my relationship with The University of New South Wales or my services providers.
5. I agree that research data gathered from the results of the study may be published, provided that my name cannot be identified.
6. I understand that if I have any questions relating to my participation in this research, I will contact Nguyen Thi Thai Lan (+62-0449862884 *(in Sydney)* or 84-437687984 *(in Vietnam)* or Prof. Richard Hugman (+62 2 9385 2778) who will be happy to answer them.
7. Complaints may be directed to the Ethics Secretariat, The University of New South Wales, SYDNEY 2052 AUSTRALIA (phone: + 62 9385 4234, fax: +62 9385 6648, email ethics.sec@unsw.edu.au).
8. I acknowledge receipt of a copy of the Information Statement and Revocation of Consent form.

.....
Signature of Research Participant

.....
Signature of Witness

.....
(Please PRINT name)

.....
(Please PRINT name)

.....
Date

.....
Nature of Witness

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

REVOCATION OF CONSENT

*(International organisations and their contributions to the development of social work services
for disadvantaged children in Vietnam)*

I hereby wish to **WITHDRAW** my consent to participate in the research proposal described above
and understand that such withdrawal **WILL NOT** jeopardise any treatment or my relationship
with The University of New South Wales.

.....

Signature

.....

Date

.....

Please PRINT Name

The section for Revocation of Consent should be forwarded to (Ms. Nguyen Thi Thai Lan. Email:
lan.nguyen@student.unsw.edu.au, address: Nguyen Thi Thai Lan, University of Labour and Social
Affairs, 43 Tran Duy Hung, Hanoi, Vietnam).

III. Consent of Support for the Research Participants

To Dr. Bui Thi Xuan Mai

Director, Social Work Development Center,

University of Labour and Social Affairs, 43 Tran Duy Hung, Hanoi, Vietnam

Dear Dr. Bui Thi Xuan Mai,

I am Lan Thi Thai Nguyen, a PHD candidate, School of Social Sciences and International Studies, the University of New South Wales, Australia. I am doing my research titled "*International Organisations and their contributions to the development of social work in Vietnam*". As a part of my data collection, I will conduct focus group interviews for children who are beneficiaries from social services provided by international organisations. There is a slight risk that children might be upset when they share their feelings and experiences of in receiving services. Could you please to provide support to these children so they can come and talk to you?

Thank you very much for your consideration,

Sincerely Yours,

Lan Nguyen Thi Thai, PhD Candidate in Social work,

School of Social Sciences and International Studies

University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

Date: 20/4/2011

Dear Lan,

I am very happy and willing to provide support to your research participants. You can give them my contact details if they are upset and need any help.

Sincerely,



Bui Thi Xuan Mai

Appendix F: Ethics Approval Certificate

Human Research Ethics Advisory Panel B Arts, Humanities & Law

Date: 31.05.2011

Investigators: Ms Lan Thi Thai Nguyen

Supervisors: Professor Richard Hugman

School: School of Social Sciences and International Studies

Re: International organisations and their contributions to the development of social work services for disadvantaged children in Vietnam

Reference Number: 11 059

The Human Research Ethics Advisory Panel B for the Arts, Humanities & Law is satisfied that this project is of minimal ethical impact and meets the requirements as set out in the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*. Having taken into account the advice of the Panel, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) has approved the project to proceed.

Your Head of School/Unit/Centre will be informed of this decision.

This approval is valid for 12 months from the date stated above.

Yours sincerely























Associate Professor Annie Cossins
Panel Convenor
HREA Panel B for the Arts, Humanities & Law

Cc: Associate Professor Rogelia Pe-Pua
Head of School






















School of Social Sciences and International Studies












*<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/>

Appendix G: Sample of Thematic Summary

	Name (Nodes)		Sources	References	Created On	Created By	Modified On	Modified By
	sustainability		13	40	1/8/2013 3:05 PM	LAN	2/1/2013 1:53 AM	LAN
		sustainability (system abuse)	2	2	1/8/2013 3:03 PM	LAN	1/28/2013 12:36 AM	LAN
		successful factors	19	54	12/13/2012 2:16 AM	LAN	2/1/2013 2:18 AM	LAN
		office culture	4	6	1/29/2013 1:57 AM	LAN	1/30/2013 2:30 AM	LAN
		program sustainability	14	34	12/13/2012 2:37 AM	LAN	1/31/2013 11:50 PM	LAN
		financial issue	12	15	12/12/2012 3:20 AM	LAN	2/1/2013 12:05 AM	LAN
	social work models		30	255	1/14/2013 7:17 PM	LAN	2/1/2013 2:02 AM	LAN
		weakness of developing models	1	1	12/12/2012 1:33 AM	LAN	12/12/2012 1:33 AM	LAN
		ways to cope with constraints (personal)	4	9	1/8/2013 7:07 PM	LAN	1/31/2013 5:41 PM	LAN
		the process of developing models	5	18	12/12/2012 1:30 AM	LAN	1/14/2013 7:25 PM	LAN
		support in macro level (policies and strategies)	3	7	12/12/2012 1:19 AM	LAN	1/8/2013 8:13 PM	LAN
		support in developing models	6	16	12/12/2012 1:24 AM	LAN	1/15/2013 1:52 AM	LAN
		strategies in solving difficulties	2	2	1/8/2013 8:07 PM	LAN	1/28/2013 2:38 AM	LAN
		project location selection	9	14	1/16/2013 2:09 AM	LAN	2/1/2013 1:41 AM	LAN
		project attraction	3	5	1/31/2013 5:52 PM	LAN	2/1/2013 1:19 PM	LAN
		process in developing programs	24	52	12/12/2012 1:52 AM	LAN	2/1/2013 1:33 PM	LAN
		mechanism in managing programs (evaluation)	8	16	12/12/2012 3:34 PM	LAN	2/1/2013 1:35 PM	LAN
		forms of programs and projects	24	54	11/23/2012 2:49 AM	LAN	2/1/2013 1:45 PM	LAN
		expectations about social work services for disadvantaged children	16	35	1/26/2013 1:01 AM	LAN	2/1/2013 1:42 PM	LAN
		expectations about social work services for disadvantaged children	12	30	12/13/2012 2:23 AM	LAN	1/23/2013 2:50 AM	LAN

		difficulties in working with IOs	4	6	1/11/2013 12:25 AM	LAN	2/1/2013 2:18 AM	LAN
		difficulties in working with government	15	44	12/12/2012 2:51 AM	LAN	1/31/2013 11:59 PM	LAN
		difficulties in practice	28	102	12/12/2012 3:12 AM	LAN	2/1/2013 1:14 PM	LAN
		difficulties in local policy	13	39	12/12/2012 3:09 AM	LAN	2/1/2013 12:07 AM	LAN
		concerns about services models	10	21	1/11/2013 12:31 AM	LAN	1/31/2013 7:59 PM	LAN
		areas of IO support	4	15	1/8/2013 7:44 PM	LAN	1/14/2013 5:59 PM	LAN
	research participants' information		6	6	1/26/2013 2:07 AM	LAN	2/1/2013 12:06 AM	LAN
	raising awareness		4	11	1/17/2013 6:05 PM	LAN	2/1/2013 1:55 AM	LAN
		support in capacity building	20	55	12/13/2012 1:31 AM	LAN	2/1/2013 2:03 AM	LAN
		personnel issue	20	87	12/12/2012 3:00 AM	LAN	2/1/2013 1:44 PM	LAN
		local capacity	9	29	1/8/2013 3:42 PM	LAN	1/28/2013 1:33 PM	LAN
		local partner's leadership-awareness raising strategy	7	16	12/12/2012 1:58 AM	LAN	1/16/2013 8:17 PM	LAN
	perceptions about child care		2	10	12/13/2012 1:37 PM	LAN	1/9/2013 6:17 PM	LAN
		attitude to clients	1	1	1/23/2013 2:14 AM	LAN	1/23/2013 2:14 AM	LAN
	local support		6	7	1/11/2013 8:21 PM	LAN	2/1/2013 1:36 PM	LAN
		local resource	3	9	1/22/2013 7:13 PM	LAN	1/28/2013 1:44 PM	LAN
		local partners' initiatives	1	1	1/8/2013 7:19 PM	LAN	1/8/2013 7:19 PM	LAN
		local NGOs	3	5	1/23/2013 2:17 AM	LAN	1/31/2013 2:55 AM	LAN
		local networking	6	11	1/16/2013 6:20 PM	LAN	2/1/2013 2:14 AM	LAN
		local experts	1	6	1/10/2013 7:57 PM	LAN	1/10/2013 8:05 PM	LAN

	IOs contributions		31	96	1/11/2013 12:20 AM	LAN	2/1/2013 1:46 PM	LAN
		roles of IOs	5	14	12/12/2012 1:23 AM	LAN	1/14/2013 3:47 PM	LAN
		social work professionalisation effects	3	7	12/13/2012 2:42 AM	LAN	1/16/2013 1:25 AM	LAN
		professionalisation effects at macro level- social policy change	2	4	11/23/2012 2:42 AM	LAN	1/16/2013 7:52 PM	LAN
		Profession Awards	2	3	1/28/2013 1:50 PM	LAN	2/1/2013 2:22 AM	LAN
		effects on future career	1	2	1/17/2013 6:32 PM	LAN	1/17/2013 6:33 PM	LAN
	IO functioning mechanism		8	24	1/11/2013 9:17 PM	LAN	1/31/2013 3:16 AM	LAN
		orientation from Headquarters	2	3	12/12/2012 1:31 AM	LAN	1/23/2013 6:12 PM	LAN
		organisational change in IOs	1	1	1/14/2013 3:04 PM	LAN	1/14/2013 3:04 PM	LAN
		leadership important roles in IOs	6	10	12/12/2012 3:21 AM	LAN	1/30/2013 1:43 AM	LAN
		IOs staff expectation	2	7	12/12/2012 6:34 PM	LAN	1/31/2013 3:13 AM	LAN
		IOs needs	2	2	1/29/2013 1:55 AM	LAN	2/1/2013 12:12 AM	LAN
		IOs' cooperation	16	58	1/14/2013 6:04 PM	LAN	2/1/2013 12:01 AM	LAN
		IO's concern	2	2	1/31/2013 3:18 AM	LAN	2/1/2013 12:14 AM	LAN
		IO staff's feelings	2	6	1/31/2013 1:24 AM	LAN	1/31/2013 5:49 PM	LAN
		difficulties from IOs	16	34	12/12/2012 3:17 AM	LAN	2/1/2013 12:06 AM	LAN
		difficulties from donors	6	20	12/12/2012 3:19 AM	LAN	1/29/2013 2:32 PM	LAN
		differences between INGOs and UN agency	4	7	1/8/2013 3:06 PM	LAN	1/26/2013 2:57 AM	LAN
		changing the approach among INGOs	1	4	1/27/2013 8:07 PM	LAN	1/28/2013 12:32 AM	LAN
		advantages of a social entrepreneur	1	3	1/29/2013 2:26 PM	LAN	1/29/2013 2:27 PM	LAN
		advantages for IOs	4	6	12/13/2012 2:01 AM	LAN	1/26/2013 2:48 AM	LAN

	indigenisation		22	104	12/12/2012 1:53 AM	LAN	2/1/2013 2:21 AM	LAN
		Vietnamese social work identity	2	3	1/8/2013 3:08 PM	LAN	1/16/2013 1:49 AM	LAN
		social work identity	1	1	1/31/2013 3:09 AM	LAN	1/31/2013 3:09 AM	LAN
		localisation	7	13	1/26/2013 12:57 AM	LAN	2/1/2013 2:16 AM	LAN
		local needs	6	14	1/16/2013 7:53 PM	LAN	2/1/2013 1:41 PM	LAN
		cultural issues	14	32	1/10/2013 2:41 PM	LAN	2/1/2013 1:22 PM	LAN
		comments about the appropriate of programs	30	89	12/12/2012 6:25 PM	LAN	2/1/2013 1:33 PM	LAN
	ideas about IOs-local partners relationship		25	101	12/12/2012 1:35 AM	LAN	2/1/2013 1:43 PM	LAN
		inequality	1	1	1/14/2013 7:39 PM	LAN	1/14/2013 7:39 PM	LAN
		roles of local leaders in the cooperation	1	1	1/11/2013 2:14 AM	LAN	1/11/2013 2:14 AM	LAN
		pressure upon the local partners	1	2	12/12/2012 3:54 PM	LAN	12/12/2012 3:55 PM	LAN
		national and international conflict	4	6	12/13/2012 2:15 AM	LAN	1/31/2013 1:22 AM	LAN
		local managing mechanism	6	14	1/11/2013 9:16 PM	LAN	1/28/2013 12:47 AM	LAN
		local focal points	5	9	1/28/2013 12:54 AM	LAN	2/1/2013 1:40 PM	LAN
		International expert issues	12	51	12/12/2012 3:52 PM	LAN	2/1/2013 1:22 PM	LAN
		differences in working methods between local and foreigners	2	4	12/12/2012 3:56 PM	LAN	1/16/2013 7:13 PM	LAN
	CRC		11	41	1/8/2013 3:27 PM	LAN	1/28/2013 12:59 AM	LAN
		children's worries	2	5	1/30/2013 3:00 PM	LAN	1/30/2013 3:26 PM	LAN
		children's ways of resolving problems	2	13	1/30/2013 2:42 PM	LAN	1/30/2013 3:23 PM	LAN
		children's dream	2	6	1/30/2013 3:08 PM	LAN	1/30/2013 3:27 PM	LAN
		children's characteristics	2	3	1/30/2013 2:48 PM	LAN	2/1/2013 1:37 PM	LAN
	context conditions		13	19	1/15/2013 1:31 AM	LAN	2/1/2013 1:13 PM	LAN
		globalisation and its consequences	3	5	1/14/2013 3:08 PM	LAN	1/29/2013 1:43 AM	LAN
		comments about SW situation	25	96	12/12/2012 1:20 AM	LAN	2/1/2013 2:27 AM	LAN
		comments about SW education	17	34	12/12/2012 6:41 PM	LAN	2/1/2013 1:56 AM	LAN
	beneficiaries		10	34	1/28/2013 1:52 PM	LAN	2/1/2013 1:50 PM	LAN
		changes for better	1	2	1/30/2013 2:40 PM	LAN	1/30/2013 2:40 PM	LAN

Appendix H: List of Reviewed Government Documents

I. List of Government Documents on Social Work Development

No	Document code	Issued date	Document title
1.	07/2013/TT-BLĐTBXH	24/05/2013	Circular 07/2013/TT-BLĐTBXH issuing the professional standards for community collaborators
2.	272/QĐ-BNV	29/3/2013	Decision on the establishment of Vietnamese Vocational Training Association And Social Work
3.	32/2010/QĐ-TTg	25/03/2010	Decision on the approval of Project on Social Work Development in Vietnam 2010-2020
4.	34/2010/TT-BLĐTBXH	08/11/2010	Circular 34/2010/TT-BLĐTBXH on professional standards of social work positions
5.	08/2010/TT-BNV	25/08/2010	Decree 08/2010/TT-BNV on issuing the job titles of social workers
6.	10/2010/TT-BGDĐT	22/03/2010	Revising the national curriculum on social work education at university and college level
7.	35/2004/QĐ-BGD&ĐT	11/10/2004	Decision No 35/2004/QĐ-BGD&ĐT issuing the national curriculum on social work education at university and college level

II. List of Vietnamese Laws related to Child Care and Protection

No	Document code	Issued date	Document names
1.	10/2012/QH13	18/06/2012	Labour Code (Old version issued on the 9th, December, 2000)
2.	66/2011/QH12	29/03/2011	Law on prevention and combat against human trafficking
3.	64/2010/QH12	07/12/2010	Law on administrative sanctions procedures
4.	51/2010/QH12	29/06/2010	Law for persons with disabilities
5.	52/2010/QH12	28/06/2010	Law on adoption
6.	40/2009/QH12	04/12/2009	Law on medical examination and treatment
7.	25/2008/QH12	14/11/2008	Law on medical insurance
8.	16/2008/QH12	03/06/2008	Law on prevention and combat against of drug dealing and abusing
9.	51/2001/QH10	21/11/2007	Law on prevention and combat against domestic violence
10.	73/2006/QH11	29/11/2006	Law on gender equality
11.	76/2006/QH11	29/11/2006	Law on vocational raining
12.	67/2006/QH11	29/06/2006	Law on informatics technology
13.	38/2005/QH11	14/06/2005	Law on education
14.	25/2004/QH11	15/06/2004	Law on protection, care, and education of children (First version issued on the 12th August, 1991)
15.	22/2000/QH10	09/06/2000	Law on marriage and families

III. List of Government Documents

No	Document code	Issued date	Document title
1.	15/2014/TT-BLĐTBXH	19/06/2014	Circular on the guidelines for the Month for Children
2.	34/2014/QĐ-TTg	30/05/2014	Decision on criteria for child friendly wards
3.	15/2014/TT-BTP	20/05/2014	Circular on guidelines for international foster families for children with disabilities and children having serious diseases, children from five years old and above, two brothers/sisters who need foster care
4.	2158/QĐ-TTg	11/11/2013	Decision on the approval of Program for Prevention of Child Accidents and Injuries
5.	144/2013/NĐ-CP	29/10/2013	Decree on the regulation of administrative sanctions on the area of child protection and care, social protection, and relief
6.	1555/QĐ-TTg	07/10/2012	Decision on the approval of the National Action Program for Children 2012-2020
7.	375/QĐ-LĐXH	28/03/2012	Decision on publishing the survey on poor and near-poor households in 2011
8.	432/2012/QĐ-UBND	29/02/2012	Decision on the implementation of support policies for children in Quang Ninh 2015
9.	03/2012/TTLT-BGDĐT-BTC-BLĐTB&XH	19/01/2012	Guidelines on the implementation of educational policies for children, students from ethnic minorities in accordance to the Prime Minister's decision 2123/QĐ-QĐ-TTg dated 22/11/2010 on approval of education project for ethnic minorities 2010-2015
10.	181/2011/TTLT-BTC-BLĐTBXH	15/12/2011	Guidelines on managing the budget on the National Program on Child Protection 2011-2015
11.	1787/QĐ-TTg	14/10/2011	Decision on providing additional state budget in 2011 for provinces to implement National Program on Child Protection
12.	91/2011/NĐ-CP	17/10/2011	Decree on regulations on administrative sanctions on the field of child protection, care, and education

13.	32/2011/QĐ-UBND	09/09/2011	Decision on the approval of project “Strengthening the child protection, care and education of children in Thua Thien - Hue 2011-2015”
14.	320/QĐ-UBND	10/08/2011	Decision on the approval of child protection program in Tuyen Quang 2011-2015
15.	71/2011/NĐ-CP	22/08/2011	Decree on detailed guidelines on implementation some articles of law on child protection, care and education
16.	29/2011/TTLT-BGDĐT-BTC	15/07/2011	Circular on Guidelines on budget expenditure on lunch for children at five at kindergartens in accordance to the Prime Minister’s decision 239/QĐ-TTg dated 9/2/2010 on the project on universal kindergarten education for children at five 2010-2015
17.	2374/QĐ-UBND	25/06/2011	Decision on issuing the child protection program in Nghe An province 2011-2015
18.	5259/QĐ-UBND	22/06/2011	Decision on approval of child protection program in Da Nang city 2011-2015
19.	528/QĐ-UBND	03/06/2011	Decision on the approval of child protection program in Dien Bien province 2011-2015
20.	1366/QĐ-UBND	26/05/2011	Decision on the approval of child protection program in Khanh Hoa province 2011-2015
21.	906/QĐ-UBND	15/04/2011	Decision on the approval of child protection program in Lao Cai province 2011-2015
22.	507/QĐ-UBND	14/04/2011	Decision on the approval of child protection program in Yen Bai province 2011-2015
23.	1316/QĐ-UBND	18/03/2011	Decision on the approval of project “Child protection, care and development for children of ethnics minorities and children in difficult circumstances in Hanoi 2011-2015
24.	249/QĐ-LĐTBXH	07/03/2011	Decision on the approval of plan on the month for children in 2011
25.	04/2011/TT-BLĐTBXH	25/02/2011	Circular on the regulations of minimum care standards for social protection centres
26.	267/QĐ-TTg	22/02/2011	Decision on the approval of National Program on Child Protection 2011-2015
27.	09/2011/ QĐ-TTg	30/01/2011	Prime Minister's decision on issuing poverty line for poor and near-poor households for 2011-2015
28.	1074/QĐ-BNV	16/09/2010	Decision on issuing the licence for the establishment of the Fund for Children with Disabilities
29.	23/2010/TT-	16/08/2010	Circular on issuing the protocol of providing interventions and support for physical and sexual

	LĐTBXH		abused children
30.	22/2010/TT-LĐTBXH	12/08/2010	Circular on regulations on the administrative protocols and criteria of acknowledging child friendly wards
31.	113/2010/TTLT-BTC-LĐTBXH	03/08/2010	Reviewing the inter-ministerial circular 116/2007/TTLT-BTC-LĐTBXH dated 27/9/2007 on guidelines on budget expenditures, procedures of clients' screening, admission, and support women and children being trafficked returning to Vietnam in accordance to the Prime Minister's decision 17/2007/QĐ-TTg dated 29/01/2007
32.	23/2010/TT-BGDĐT	23/07/2010	Circular on the issue of the standards of children's development criteria at five years of age
33.	37/2010/QĐ-TTg	22/04/2010	Decision on the issue of the criteria on children friendly wards
34.	418/QĐ-BTP	18/01/2010	Decision on the issue the plan to implement the Prime Minister's directive 1408/CT-TTg dated 1/9/2009 on strengthening child protection and care
35.	39/2009/TT-BGDĐT	29/12/2009	Circular on the issue of the regulation on integrative education for children in difficult circumstances
36.	1277/QĐ-LĐTBXH	09/10/2009	Decision on emergency relief for children in natural disaster areas
37.	1258/QĐ-LĐTBXH	06/10/2009	Decision on the approval of the reviewed comprehensive plan on the project on support for street children
38.	1408/CT-TTg	01/09/2009	Directives on strengthening child protection and care
39.	18/2009/TT-BKHCN	26/08/2009	Circular on the issue the "National technical standards on safe toys for children"
40.	1095/QĐ-LĐTBXH	21/08/2009	Decision on adjusting some of the contents in plan on "Preventing and addressing the child labour in dangerous and poisonous working conditions in 2009"
41.	84/2009/QĐ-TTg	04/06/2009	Decision on the approval of National Plan for Children Affected by HIV/AIDs to 2010 and Visions to 2020

42.	589/QĐ-BLĐTBXH	11/05/2009	Decision on the approval of Plan for Prevention of Child Accidents and Injuries 2009-2010 of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs
43.	29/2008/TT-BLĐTBXH	28/11/2008	Circular on the guidelines on the issue and managing health cards for children under six years old in public clinics
44.	06-CT-UBND	26/11/2008	Directives on strengthening the guidance and implementation of child protection and care
45.	87/2008/TT-BTC	08/10/2008	Circular on the guidance on the utilisation of Children's Fund
46.	86/2008/TTLT-BTC-BLĐTBXH	06/10/2008	Circular on the guidelines on the management and utilisation of funding on the implementation of the Prime Minister's Decision 19/2004/QĐ-TTg dated 12-02-2004 on approving the program to prevent and resolve the situation of street children, sexually abused children, and children working in hazardous conditions, 2004-2010
47.	1451/QĐ-TTg	06/10/2008	Decision on the adjustment on the project on rehabilitation for children with disabilities at centre for children with disabilities no 1 Vietnam
48.	1056/QĐ-BNV	05/08/2008	Decision on the approval of the regulations of Vietnamese Association of Child Rights Protection
49.	464/QĐ-BNV	08/04/2008	Decision on the approval of the establishment of Vietnamese Association of Child Rights Protection
50.	15/2008/TTLT-BTC-BYT	05/02/2008	Circular on the Guidelines on the implementation of health care, managing and the use of budget for child health care for children under six years old at public clinics
51.	168 /QĐ-LĐTBXH	24/01/2008	Decision on the functions, missions, responsibilities, and organisational structure of Department of Child Protection and Care
52.	116/2007/TTLT-BTC-BLĐTBXH	27/09/2007	Circular on the Guidelines on the expenditures for screening, admission for trafficked children and women to integration into community in accordance to the Prime Minister's Decision 17/2007/QĐ-TTg dated 29/01/2007
53.	16/2007/CT-TTg	27/06/2007	Directives on strengthening the implementation of Action Plan on Prevention of Criminals on Women and Children's Trafficking

54.	68/2007/TTLT-BTC-BLĐTBOXH	20/06/2007	Circular on the guidelines of the management of funds for implementation of decision No. 65/2005/QĐ-TTg dated 25/03/2005 of the Prime Minister approving the project "Providing community-based care for orphans and abandoned children, children with severely disabilities, children who are victims of toxic chemicals, and children living with HIV/AIDS period 2005-2010"
55.	05/2007/TT-BTNMT	30/05/2007	Circular on the instructions on providing incentives to use land for educational institutions, health, culture, sports, science-technology, environment, social, population, family, and child protection and care
56.	17/2007/QĐ-TTg	29/01/2007	Decision on the regulations on supporting reception and reintegration into community for returned women and children trafficked
57.	114/2006/NĐ-CP	03/10/2006	Decree on the regulation of administrative sanctions in area of population and children
58.	36/2006/NĐ-CP	03/04/2006	Decree on the operation of inspection on the area of population, family, and children
59.	08/2006/TTLT-BTC-BLĐTBOXH	23/01/2006	Circular on the guidelines on the funding for the implementation of the Prime Minister's decision 65/2005 / QĐ-TTg dated 25/03/2005 on the project "Providing community-based care for orphaned children, abandoned children, children with severely disabilities, children who are victims of toxic chemicals, and children living with HIV / AIDS period 2005-2010"
60.	03/2005/QĐ-DSGDTE	29/07/2005	Decision on the issue of the regulation on report statistics on population, family, and children
61.	02/2005/QĐ-DSGDTE	29/07/2005	Decision on the issue of the criteria system on statistics of population, families, and children
62.	2169/2005/QĐ-UBND	27/07/2005	Decision on the approval of the project "Education for children with disabilities"
63.	65/2005/QĐ-TTg	25/03/2005	Decision on the approval of the project "Providing community-based care for orphaned children, abandoned children, children with severely disabilities, children who are victims of toxic chemicals, and children living with HIV/AIDS period 2005-2010"

64.	36/2005/NĐ-CP	17/03/2005	Decree on the regulations on the implementation of some articles of the law on child protection, care, and education of children
65.	16/2005/TTLT-BTC-UBDSGDTE-BLĐTBXH	03/03/2005	Circular on the Guidelines on the management and use of funds for implementation of the Prime Minister's decision 19/2004/QĐ-TTg dated 02/12/2004 on approval of programs to prevent and resolve the situation of street children, sexually abused children, and children working in hazardous conditions 2004-2010
66.	10/2004/TTLT-BLĐTBXH-BTC	28/06/2004	Circular on the Guidelines on the implementation of the Prime Minister's decision 38/2004/QĐ-TTg dated 17/3/2004 provide financial support policies for families and individuals adopting orphaned children and abandoned children
67.	210/2004/QĐ-TTg	14/12/2004	Decision on the regulations on activities of the Steering Committee of the action plan against trafficking of women and children
68.	112/2004/TT-BTC	24/11/2004	Circular on the Guidelines on the management and the use of Vietnam Child Protection Fund
69.	01/2004/QĐ-DSGDTE	24/05/2004	Decision on the issue of the regulations on the organisation and activities of Vietnam Child Protection Fund
70.	38/2004/QĐ-TTg	17/03/2004	Decision on the financial support policies for families and individuals adopting orphaned children and abandoned children
71.	19/2004/QĐ-TTg	12/02/2004	Decision on the approval of the program on prevention and resolve the situation of street children, sexually abused children, and children working in hazardous conditions 2004-2010
72.	205/2001/QĐ-BVCSTE	16/10/2001	Decision on the issue of the regulations of Vietnam Child Protection Fund (revised version)
73.	784/2001/QĐ-TCBĐ	14/09/2001	Decision on the Regulation on free transactions from the Vietnam Child Protection Fund to children in special circumstances
74.	07/2001/TT-BVCSTE	20/06/2001	Circular on the Vietnamese family day founded by the Committee on Child Protection and Care in accordance to the implementation of the Prime Minister's decision 72/2001/QĐ-TTg dated

			04/05/2001
75.	13/2001/CT-TTg	31/05/2001	Directives on the Review of 10 years after the implementation of the law on child protection, care and education (1991-2000)
76.	02/2001/CT-TTg	09/03/2001	Directives on the Implementation of the “Year for social voluntary work for children in special circumstances” 2001-2002
77.	23/2001-QĐ-TTg	26/02/2001	Decision on the approval of the National Action Plan for Children in Vietnam 2001-2010
78.	6/1998/CT-TTg	23/01/1998	Directives on strengthening the protection of children, prevention and resolve the situation of street children, child labour
79.	13/1998/TTLT-TCCP-UBBVCSTE	07/01/1998	Circular on the guidelines on the functions, missions, responsibilities and organisational structure of provincial Committee on Child Protection and Care; Units on Child Protection and Care at ministries, mass organisations at central level
80.	132/1997/QĐ-BT	20/11/1997	Decision on the issue of the regulations on the inspection the child protection, care, and education activities
81.	69/1997/TTLB-BTC-UBCSBVTE	04/10/1997	Circular on the guidelines on the activities and expenditure norms for program on child protection and care in 1997
82.	766/1997/QĐ-TTg	17/09/1997	Decision on the responsibilities of governmental agencies and social organisations in the prevention of women and children trafficking
83.	452/1997/TC-TCNH	25/06/1997	Directives on regulations on the list of fee and insurance for long-life insurance at 5, 10 years, and insurance for children
84.	93/QĐ-BT	15/08/1996	Decision on the issue of the Medal for contribution on the child protection and care
85.	298-TTg	11/05/1996	Circular on the Review of 5 years after the implementation of the law on child protection, care and education
86.	28/TT-BT	15/03/1996	Circular on the guidelines on the activities and expenditure norms for program on child protection and care in 1996

87.	61-TT-BT	15/05/1995	Circular on the guidelines on planning the review of five years of child protection, care, and education in Vietnam 1991-1995 and developing the national action plan for children 1996-2000
88.	118-CP	07/09/1994	Decree 118-CP on the functions, missions, responsibilities, and organisational structure of the Vietnam Committee of Child Care
89.	01/TTLB	19/01/1993	Circular on the issue of the temporary regulations on the adoption by foreigners with orphaned children, abandoned children, and children with disabilities living in protection centres managed by Labour, Invalids, and Social Affairs
90.	374/HĐBT	11/11/1991	Detailed regulations of the implementation of law on child protection, care and education
91.	325/BYT-QĐ	20/04/1990	Decision on the establishment of the government Unit on Health Protection for Mothers and Children, and Family Planning
92.	241/NQ-HĐNN8	20/02/1990	Ratifying the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child
93.	102-CT	27/04/1989	Directives on strengthening the child protection, care and education
94.	160-LTC	14/11/1979	Issuing the activities on child protection, care and education
95.	21/BYT-CT	08/08/1969	Directives on health protection for children in kindergartens and social institutions