

Review of UNICEF Support to Street Children Activities

“Peuan Mit” Building a Sustainable Street Children Project in Lao PDR



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UNICEF Lao PDR

Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare in collaboration with
Friends International

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Abbreviations

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CNSP	Children In Need of Special Protection
CRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
FI	Friends-International
GoL	Government of Lao PDR
HR	Human Resources
IEC	Information Education Communication
Lao PDR	Lao People's Democratic Republic
LSW	Labour and Social Welfare
LWU	Lao Women's Union
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MoLSW	Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
PCA	Programme Cooperation Agreement
RH	Reproductive Health
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

1 Executive Summary

Since May 2004, UNICEF has supported street children activities in Lao PDR through financial and technical inputs to a project commonly referred to as 'Peuan Mit' (meaning strong friendship in the Lao language), which is implemented through a cooperation agreement between the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and Friends-International, an NGO with considerable experience designing and running street children programmes in the region.

The project's goal is ambitious, as indicated by the full project title, "Building a Sustainable Street Children Project in Lao PDR". The project aims to:

- Develop social work capacity within the Project and among government counterparts.
- Provide children living and working on the streets with access to services that protect them from harm and ensure the fulfilment of child rights defined by the CRC.
- Reintegrate children living and working on the streets into family care and school; and assist young people to gain vocational skills and find decent work.
- Reduce the number of new children coming on to the streets.

To achieve these outcomes, a wide-ranging program has been put in place that includes outreach work on the streets, a drop-in centre for street children, the reintegration of street children back into their families and prevention work with high-risk communities.

This review was conducted in November 2006 to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the project, identify constraints, summarize lessons learnt, and recommend how the project can be strengthened. It is anticipated that the results of the review will assist the MoLSW, Friends-International and UNICEF to assess the achievements of the project and help inform the implementation of UNICEF's new country programme (2007–2011).

The methodology of the review was designed in consultation with UNICEF and Peuan Mit, and with reference to UNICEF Evaluation Report Standards. Key tasks included a review of project documents, development of assessment tools and extensive fieldwork to each component of the project. Project beneficiaries, staff and key stakeholders participated in individual and group interviews, group discussions and self-administered check-list surveys. The scale of the project and the limited time available for the review posed a challenge to the review team, but no critical limitations were encountered.

The review found that the project has been well-designed, based on a careful analysis of the situation of street children in Lao PDR and with the full participation of institutional stakeholders and beneficiaries. The project comprises a highly relevant, comprehensive and holistic program of activities and services to reduce the vulnerability of children living and working on the streets while supporting their reintegration into family care, school and society. The project contributes to the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the achievement of Millennium Development Goals and the achievement of strategic goals declared by the Government of Lao PDR, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and UNICEF in Lao PDR.

The project has made considerable progress in a short period of time and achievements are especially impressive considering the lack of existing professional social work capacity in Laos, the limited range of complementary services for children in need of special protection, and the acute needs of the children and families supported.

The quality of programme implementation was found to be high and significant results at the level of outputs were found to have been achieved in all programme areas – Outreach, Drop-in Centre, Reintegration, Prevention and Capacity Building. A large number of street children have accessed essential services delivered through street outreach and at the Drop-in Centre. Some 60 street children have been reintegrated into family care and more than 200 have been assisted to return to school. Around 20 young people on the streets have begun vocational training and are expected to find employment once they complete training. The prevention programme has provided at-risk children and young people with access to education, training, health care and psychosocial support. Parents of at-risk children have also been supported through material assistance, medical care and psychosocial support in an effort to address factors causing children to leave school and enter street life. A team of trained social workers has been established by Peuan Mit and capacity has been built to varying degrees among LSW officials at different levels.

The impact of these interventions on the lives of young people was difficult to assess since monitoring mechanisms including baseline data, measurable indicators and means of verification were not in place. However, consultations with beneficiaries and stakeholders identified examples of positive changes in the situation of street children as a result of access to healthcare, education, food, accommodation and other services delivered by the project. In relation to reintegration, impacts can be inferred from the number of children and young people leaving the streets for family care, enrolling in school and accessing vocational training. In the prevention programme, the number of at-risk children supported at public schools also gives an indication of the impact the project has had on the lives of children. Positive comments from parents and local authorities also offer some anecdotal evidence that the mobile school, life-skills training, health care and family support have made a real difference to children's lives. Improved monitoring mechanisms need to be put in place to enable a more detailed assessment of the impact the project is having on the lives of children, young people and families.

Although it is too early in the project cycle to expect significant results at the level of intended outcomes, this review identified several promising indications that progress is being made at this level, particularly relating to social work capacity building, the reintegration of street children into society and reducing the vulnerability of children on the streets. Given the short implementation time, longitudinal data was not available with which to assess whether there has been a reduction in the number of new children coming onto the streets.

The project is still in its infancy and will require additional inputs of technical and financial support in the short to medium term in order to consolidate achievements, to build capacity and ensure sustainability. During this time, stakeholders will need to carefully explore options for support to street children in the longer-term - several different operating modalities have been proposed and each needs to be assessed in terms of effectiveness, feasibility, strengths and limitations.

It is the recommendation of this review that the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Friends-International and UNICEF agree a further period of cooperation, taking into consideration the recommendations of this report.

Summary of recommendations

- Intensify efforts to place children currently sleeping at the Drop-in Centre into family care; ensuring reintegration is voluntary, safe, sustainable, in the best interests of the child and consistent with other provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Prioritize the development of a national guardianship system with rigorous procedures for pre-placement assessment and monitoring by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare.
- Reduce the number of children and families under case-management in order to assure quality by prioritising the most urgent cases; ensure a more even case-load distribution among Peuan Mit social workers.
- Review the scale of prevention work to ensure sufficient resources are available for work with children already on the streets, who are the immediate priority at this stage. The prevention programme is broad and several components could be scaled back.
- Ensure vocational training is gender sensitive and places are reserved to the most vulnerable young people.
- Address gaps in human resources by recruiting a programme manager and a qualified, experienced social work advisor.
- Encourage more active involvement of LSW officials, education officials and school directors in relevant programme areas in order to build local capacity and reduce the workload on Peuan Mit staff.
- Strengthen coordination and linkages between Peuan Mit, local authorities and national child protection initiatives, including those supported by UNICEF.
- Assist Savannakhet Province LSW officials to develop capacity to work with street children and street families.
- Devise an advocacy and communication strategy targeting the general public, police and local officials to encourage more positive attitudes towards street children, reduce prejudice, discrimination, and violence.
- Improve monitoring and reporting systems to provide a clearer picture of the number of beneficiaries, impacts on the lives of beneficiaries and progress towards intended outcomes.

2 Background

2.1 Project description

UNICEF has supported initiatives responding to the needs of street children in Lao PDR since 2001, beginning with groundbreaking research conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MoLSW) to assess the situation of street children and child beggars in five provinces of Lao PDR. The findings of the research report¹ recommended a comprehensive response focussed on Vientiane, the capital city and the area with the greatest concentration of street children.

In Lao PDR the term ‘street children’ refers to several categories of children who spend a significant part of their time on the streets:

- Street living children - children who have cut ties with their parents and live on the streets;
- Street working children - children working on the streets during the day or night but returning home on a regular basis;
- Children of street families - children who live or work on the streets with their parents.

An initial programme of outreach work with street children in Vientiane Capital began in 2002. In 2004 the Government of Lao PDR invited Friends-International, an NGO with considerable experience working with street children in Cambodia and elsewhere in the region, to establish a broader programme of support. A 3-year MoU was signed between Friends-International and the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare in May 2004 to implement a project entitled “Building a sustainable street children project in Lao PDR – Implementation and capacity building”. In June 2004 UNICEF signed an agreement with Friends-International to provide financial and technical support.

The project, commonly referred to as ‘Peuan Mit’, meaning ‘strong friendship’ in the Lao language, has the following objectives:²

- To develop social work capacity within the Project and among government counterparts.
- To provide children living and working on the streets with access to services that protect them from harm and ensure the fulfilment of child rights as defined by the CRC.
- To reintegrate children living and working on the streets into family care and school; and assist young people to gain vocational skills and find decent work.
- To reduce the number of new children coming on to the streets.

In order to attain these objectives, a wide-ranging program has been put in place that includes capacity building in social work skills and systems, support to street children through outreach work, a drop-in centre and two vocational training centres, wide-ranging support to parents of street children to facilitate reintegration efforts, and prevention work with high-risk communities.

Peuan Mit is a collaboration between the MoLSW and Friends-International, working closely with Vientiane Capital Department of LSW. The choice of MoLSW as main government counterpart is based on its mandate to develop policies and practices relating to children in need of special protection. An Advisory Committee meets 2-3 times per year to support the project by

¹ *Street Children and Child Beggars*, MoLSW & UNICEF, 2001.

² These objectives have been compiled by the reviewer from several project documents that state objectives slightly differently.

providing advice on request, reviewing annual work plans and advocating for the project and for the interests of street children. Major donors including UNICEF and Aid et Action are represented on the advisory committee alongside Vientiane Capital Department of LSW and other key government agencies.

2.2 About the review

2.2.1 Purpose and context of the review

This review was carried out to comprehensively assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the project, explore constraints, summarize lessons learnt, identify how the project can be strengthened and make specific recommendations for future UNICEF support to children living and working on the streets.

The review coincides with the end of UNICEF's five-year country programme and comes towards the end of the 3-year MoU between the MoLSW and Friends-International. It is anticipated that the results of the review will help inform the implementation of UNICEF's new country programme (2007–2011) and assist the MoLSW and Friends-International to assess achievements under the current MoU.

2.2.2 Design and methodology

The review was conducted in November 2006 by an international consultant with assistance from three national field-work assistants. The methodology was designed in consultation with UNICEF and Peuan Mit, and with reference to UNICEF Evaluation Report Standards³. The results of several previous assessment reports were used to identify issues for the review to explore in depth.⁴

The principal methodologies used were document review, interviews (structured and unstructured), self-administered questionnaires and checklists, focus group discussions and participant observation.⁵ Cost-effectiveness was assessed using records of financial expenditure and data on the number of children accessing different project services.

The review explored the full range of project activities and included consultations with a total of 100 children and young people (direct beneficiaries) and 65 adult stakeholders, including:⁶

- Children, young people and their families
- Project staff
- Officials from the MoLSW
- Officials from Vientiane Capital Department of LSW
- Officials from District Departments of LSW in Vientiane Capital
- Village and District Police
- Village authorities
- School Directors and teachers
- UNICEF and other donor agencies

³ Evaluation Report Standards, UNICEF, New York, Sept 2004.

⁴ Sebastien Marot, *Peuan Mit End of Year 1 Evaluation*, Friends-International, April 2005; *UNICEF Supported Street Children Activities Monitoring Report*, UNICEF Lao PDR internal report, March 2005; *Evaluation of Peuan Mit activities by its beneficiaries*, Peuan Mit, Aug 2005.

⁵ A list of assessment tools is included as an Annex to this report.

⁶ Details of fieldwork visits and data collection are included as an Annex to this report.

Ethical guidelines were followed during interviews and focus groups with children and young people, ensuring informed consent, confidentiality, gender sensitivity, and voluntary participation.⁷

Every effort was made to ensure stakeholder participation during the review process and to ensure stakeholder ownership of the results. The objectives of the review, methodology, proposed list of informants, schedule of data collection and preliminary findings were discussed with key stakeholders. Copies of all survey tools developed for the review were handed over to the project.

2.2.3 Limitations of the methodology

The review coincided with a particularly busy period for Peuan Mit which slowed the pace of data collection. A one week visit by the Belgium National UNICEF Committee was followed by the opening of the project's new training restaurant. Both events required intensive preparation by key project staff which meant they had limited time to support the review process at that time. Key stakeholders were not available to review draft findings and recommendations on the scheduled date, which delayed the finalisation of the report.

The scale of the project, which is undoubtedly one its of strengths, posed significant challenges for the review team in terms of the time required to make a thorough assessment. The project is wide-ranging and complex, comprising numerous activities, working with several distinct groups of beneficiaries and operating in many different communities dispersed throughout Vientiane Capital and other provinces. Several technical aspects of the project – for example, the provision of medical care, non-formal education, case-management and psycho-social counselling - would benefit from a separate detailed assessment by specialists in those fields.

Consultations with very young children staying at the Peuan Mit Centre generated limited data. In retrospect, Peuan Mit social workers would be much better placed to collect feedback from street children accessing services at the Drop-in Centre than external reviewers – they know the children well and are trusted. Bias and subjectivity could be reduced by selecting staff who normally work outside the Centre to conduct interviews and focus group discussions with children at the Centre, and visa-versa. This approach was used successfully in the 2005 beneficiaries' evaluation.

The assessment of project efficiency was constrained by weaknesses in the available data. The project's accounting system did not provide information on the activity associated with each item of expenditure so this information had to be added retrospectively, which may have introduced a margin of error. Moreover, data on the number of individual beneficiaries had not been recorded for some services and activities, meaning estimated numbers had to be used.

⁷ *Children and participation: research, monitoring and evaluation with children and young people*, Save the Children, November 2000; *So You Want to Consult with Children – a toolkit of good practice*, International Save the Children Alliance, November 2003.

3 Findings

3.1 Project design

3.1.1 Relevance of the project

The project design responds to significant child protection issues that were highlighted in research conducted by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare with support from UNICEF in 2001⁸. The project was designed with the participation of major institutional stakeholders (Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, UNICEF and Friends-International) and beneficiaries - street children and street families were consulted during the initial research conducted in 2001 and during a needs assessment conducted in Sept 2004.

Peuan Mit has made a concerted effort to network with other projects, initiatives and services working with children and young people in order to share experience, to maximize impact and avoid duplication.⁹ However, in practice opportunities for collaboration have been limited. Peuan Mit is the first and only project working with street children in Lao PDR¹⁰ and there is an acute lack of services for children in need of special protection. Peuan Mit has found that existing mainstream services offering, for example, training in vocational and life-skills are not accessible to street children for a variety of reasons.¹¹

3.1.2 Relationship and synergy between activities

The project comprises several inter-related components that together form a coherent and comprehensive response to street children issues:

- Outreach activities to make contact with street children and provide essential services;
- A drop-in centre to provide support services to street children;
- Reintegration of street children into school, family and work;
- A prevention programme to reduce the number of children coming on to the street;
- Capacity building in social work skills for long term sustainability.

Similar activities and services are provided under different project components, thus ensuring a continuum of care as children make the transition from street life into school, family and the wider community. A summary of activities and services associated with each programme area is shown in the following matrix:

⁸ *Street Children and Child Beggars*, MoLSW & UNICEF, 2001.

⁹ Vientiane Youth Centre for Health and Development (LWU), Handicap International Belgium, the Mental Health Unit at Mahosot Hospital, Population Services International, Dongkoi Children's Development Centre, Shelter for Women and Children (LWU), AFESIP Centre for victims of trafficking, Room to Read.

¹⁰ Several small-scale private initiatives working with street children have sprung up in Vientiane Capital over recent years but none of them provide a professionally designed, long term and comprehensive response.

¹¹ Obstacles include the cost of course fees, entry requirements stipulating completion of basic education, and institutional cultures that overlook or ignore the specific needs of children from poor and marginalized backgrounds.

Activities and services

Project component	Remedial education	Recreational activities	Life-skills training	Counselling and life plans	Medical care and first aid	Improved living conditions	Support to attend school	Vocational training	Income generation	Community Dev plans	Case management
Street outreach	X	X	X	X	X				X	X	X
Drop-in Centre	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Reintegration				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Prevention	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

3.1.3 Internal logic and coherence

The project design incorporates basic principles of results based management and includes a logical framework illustrating the relationship between inputs, activities and different levels of results (outputs, outcomes and objectives). However, there are some shortcomings in the way it is presented in project documents:

- Statements of overall objectives are not consistently worded in different documents over time;
- Outcome statements focus on processes (e.g. setting up teams, providing services) rather than impacts (e.g. expected change in children’s lives);
- Intended results at different levels are not all accompanied by measurable, time-bound indicators of achievement.

The reviewer was able to develop a coherent results chain based on project documentation, which is included as an annex to this report. There is a clear and logical connection between expected results throughout the chain and chosen strategies are relevant to project objectives. Intended outputs and outcomes described in the results chain have been used in this review as a framework in assessing the effectiveness of project implementation.

3.1.4 Child rights

The project has been designed with specific reference to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The project’s strong emphasis on child participation is particularly noteworthy and is discussed in a separate section of this report. The MoU signed between the MoLSW and Friends-International describes how project activities are intended to address unfulfilled rights claims and how these relate to key articles and guiding principles of the CRC:¹²

- *Right to life* – providing nutritious food, shelter, a safe environment and medical care;
- *Right to development* – providing opportunities, training, education and recreation;
- *Right to protection* – tackling all forms of abuse against children including physical, sexual, and emotional abuse;
- *Right to participation* – making children aware of their rights and promoting their active involvement in decisions within the project and in the community.

¹² Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and Friends-International, 19th May 2004.

3.1.5 Consistency with national strategies and plans

Project objectives are clearly related to goals of the 2002-2006 Country Programme of Cooperation agreed between UNICEF and the GoL (specifically to ‘Strengthen Social Protection Systems and Services’)¹³ and the 2002-2006 UNDAF goal of “Improving child rights and care, and reducing child and youth vulnerability”.¹⁴ These UN Country strategies are themselves consistent with key national strategies and plans relating to human development, poverty reduction and social welfare.¹⁵ The project also contributes to towards the achievement of Millennium Development Goals 1 and 2.¹⁶

3.1.6 Changes in project design and implementation

In the project MoU, activity descriptions were intentionally written quite loosely in order to allow the project to adapt to changing circumstances and newly identified needs.¹⁷ Several modifications introduced during the course of implementation are worth noting:

- The Centre was designed as a drop-in facility and did not originally envisage providing overnight accommodation. However, in November 2004, one month after opening, many street children (some as young as 5 years old) were put in district prisons as part of efforts by local authorities to ‘beautify’ the city in preparation for the 10th ASEAN Summit, held in Vientiane that month. In response, Peuan Mit opened a temporary night-shelter and negotiated the release of children from detention. The night shelter has remained in place since.
- Based on the results of internal evaluations conducted in 2005, which identified vocational training as a priority need for older street children, Peuan Mit established a motorbike repair workshop at end of 2005 and a training restaurant in mid-2006.
- The need for additional prevention strategies to reduce the number of new children coming onto the streets was identified as a priority in the Friends-International internal evaluation conducted in 2005 and a community outreach strategy focussed on a ‘mobile school’ was immediately put into operation.
- In 2006, in recognition that economic factors are a significant determinant in pushing children onto the streets, Peuan Mit began a home-based production scheme, in which parents of street children and vulnerable children are able to generate income through the production of handicraft items.

¹³ *Master Plan of Operations 2002-2006*, GoL & UNICEF, December 2001, p117.

¹⁴ *United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) Lao PDR 2002-2006*, UNDP & GoL, July 2002, p82.

¹⁵ See in particular, the National Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy, the National Socio-Economic Development Plan and the Labour and Social Welfare Development Policy for the Year 2020, 2010, and 2005.

¹⁶ Goal 1 - Reducing poverty and hunger; Goal 2 - Universal primary education.

¹⁷ Comments made by the project’s MoLSW counterpart during interview.

3.2 Effectiveness or project implementation

3.2.1 Delivery of planned outputs

This section describes the main outputs achieved by the project during the first two years of implementation from July 2004 to June 2006. Significant quantitative and qualitative results have been achieved against all planned outputs. However, due to the lack of quantitative indicators in project documents it is not possible to make a comparison between outputs planned and outputs achieved. Outputs are presented as they relate to intended outcomes (based on the results chain included as an Annex to this report).

Outcome 1: Social work capacity is developed for work with street children within the Project and among government counterparts.

Output 1.1 - A team of social workers is established and skilled to work with street children

Peuan Mit has established a small team of nine social workers to lead project activities. There is no history of social work in Lao PDR and there are no professional social workers in the country. It has therefore been necessary to provide intensive training in social work skills and on other topics relevant to working with street children. Social workers have been assigned as team leaders for each project component (street outreach, the Drop-in Centre, reintegration and prevention work) and as key staff within each team. All support staff (24 in total, including teachers, trainers, activity facilitators, outreach workers, house parents and volunteers¹⁸) have also completed basic training in social work methods and other topics related to their work.

Training completed¹⁹

Advanced social work skills	Reproductive health (RH)
Advocacy for children in conflict with the law	Development of RH health IEC materials
Case management	School reintegration
Child and youth participation	Snap-shot survey methods
HIV/AIDS	Story telling techniques
Home based production	Street children issues
NFE curriculum design	Substance abuse
Participatory research	Suicide
Hygiene	Trauma

Training was found to be appropriate, of high quality and effective. Training took place both in-country, with technical inputs from Friends International trainers, and in Cambodia and Thailand. Post-training evaluations show that project staff were satisfied with the quality of training received; all staff surveyed for this review (100%) agreed with the statement that 'training from Peuan Mit is of good quality'. An assessment by Friends International noted that staff have been able to put newly acquired skills into practice.²⁰

However, Peuan Mit social workers and other staff interviewed for this review requested additional training on working with children and adults affected by drug abuse, which they

¹⁸ A list of all staff is included as an annex to this report.

¹⁹ Summarised from the project annual report, 2nd PCA Report (July 2005 to June 2006) to UNICEF LAO PDR, September 2006, p18-23.

²⁰ Sebastien Marot, *Peuan Mit End of Year 1 Evaluation*, Friends-International, April 2005.

identified as a significant emerging issue affecting street children and other groups of vulnerable children. Several also requested English language and basic computer training to enable them to access literature relevant to their work. The medical supervisor suggested all staff should receive further First Aid training to enable them to provide basic medical care in the communities they work and to allow the medical coordinator to focus on more serious cases.

Output 1.2 - Government officials at central and local level are integrated into project activities

Peuan Mit aims to integrate government staff into project activities in order to build national capacity for social work in general and for work with street children in particular. In this respect, the number of government staff recruited to the project and constructive collaboration with LSW officials at different levels is encouraging, but participation of LSW staff at the province and district level remains limited.

Three government staff have been integrated into the project and trained as social workers. Two have management responsibility (one MoLSW staff member manages the Drop-in Centre team and another manages the reintegration team); a third government officer recruited from Vientiane Capital Department of LSW provides cross-team support. Salaries are not paid to government staff working with Peuan Mit but they do receive allowances for travel and overtime. Nevertheless, government staff's total take-home package is less than that of staff recruited from the private sector, which is a cause of some tension.

Peuan Mit has developed close relationships with counterparts in the MoLSW and Vientiane Capital Department of LSW through routine meetings on a weekly basis to provide updates on implementation, share plans for the coming week and discuss issues as they arise. The MoLSW focal point has been closely involved since the inception of the project, has a thorough knowledge of the project, has given consistent support and provided constructive recommendations to improve the project and reinforce links with other government agencies. Unfortunately, the focal point at Vientiane Capital LSW Department was recently transferred to another post and his replacement has not yet gained a detailed understanding of the project.

Collaboration with officials at the provincial, district and village level was found to be generally strong. Most officials told this review that they often met with Peuan Mit staff and received regular written progress reports. Village and district officials have frequently called Peuan Mit when new children arrive on the streets and transport officials at the main bus station have also called on several occasions to report new arrivals of street families and children from other provinces. District police officers have contacted Peuan Mit on many occasions after detaining children for being on the street late at night or for petty crime (usually stealing). The reintegration team has received valuable assistance from provincial LSW officials to trace families of street children and arrange for assessment visits. However, LSW officials do not always accompany project staff on assessment and follow-up visits, which has implications for capacity building and sustainability.

Some gaps were identified in local officials' understanding about Peuan Mit and in the level of cooperation with the project. Several District LSW officials knew only a limited range of Peuan Mit activities and services being delivered in their area and had only a vague idea of which communities under their jurisdiction Peuan Mit was working in. Similarly, most village authorities were knowledgeable about project activities, but several were less well-informed.

Output 1.3 - Social work systems and procedures are developed and put into place

Significant progress has been made towards establishing social work procedures and systems based on the experience of Friends-International, UNICEF and other organisations. A case-management system has been developed and specific procedures and forms have been designed for family and school reintegration, school support and follow up, vocational training and income generation activities. A detailed child protection code has been put in place, which must be signed by all project staff and visitors to project activities. A separate code of conduct has been developed for journalists and photographers visiting the project. However, specific procedures for alternative care, including guardianship arrangements, have not yet been developed. Peuan Mit has initiated discussions with MoLSW and the Lao Bar Association on the subject, but there are no concrete results so far.

Systems and procedures were found to be inconsistently followed in some programme areas. Particular weaknesses were identified in the case management system where a rapid audit of case-files for children regularly staying overnight at the Drop-in Centre found many incomplete records. The review team was able to fill in missing information from case workers, which indicates the information is collected but not always recorded. Case-workers explained they don't have enough time to keep files up to date. Indeed, 150 case-files have been opened, there are only nine social workers and the case-load is not evenly distributed, meaning some staff have more cases than they can reasonably be expected to handle.

Forms developed and in use

Individual information (child or adult)
Individual assessment (child adult)
Family information
Family assessment
Case management form
Community needs survey
Community planning
School and family follow-up
Income generation activity follow-up
Child abuse report and referral

Outcome 2: Children living and working on the streets have access to services that protect them from harm and ensure the fulfilment of child rights as defined by the CRC.

Output 2.1 - Improved understanding of the situation of children on the streets

Outreach work with children on the streets is the longest running of all project activities and is well established with a young but experienced team comprising 2 social workers (female) and one volunteer (male). The outreach team is familiar with the many different places where street children congregate around the city and have mapped this information in order to share with other project teams. The team maintains an intense schedule of work, regularly visiting 50 specific locations around the city. The outreach team was found to have good knowledge about individual street children, knew many by name and had developed trusting relationships.

“Usually children are wary the first time they see us. They will stand a little way off watching the other children playing games with us. Perhaps the second or third time they will join in the games. Then it takes several more contacts before we can begin to get their story.” (Peuan Mit outreach worker)

The team has also conducted periodic snapshot surveys and several other research exercises to increase understanding about the situation of children on the streets and the risks they face, and to help identify appropriate responses:

- A needs assessment with 26 street children;
- A needs assessment survey with 22 street families;
- A KAP survey on drug use with 31 children.

Output 2.2 - Children have access to protective services on the streets

Approximately 240 individual street children were in regular contact with the outreach team at the time of this review. This is similar to the average number of street children identified through snapshot surveys (see annex). However, Peuan Mit estimates there are approximately 500 street children in Vientiane, which implies the outreach work reaches approximately 50% of all children on the streets.

Outreach work has effectively targeted children of different ages and gender, and in different circumstances on the streets. The demographic profile of children participating in outreach activities closely matches that of street children identified in periodic snapshot surveys²¹: slightly less than half the street children participating in outreach activities were female; the majority (76%) were under the age of 15 and half (49%) were less than 10 years old;²² most children were working on the streets (81%), while a minority were living on their own on the streets (11%) and with their family on the street (8%).²³

Outreach activities have provided street children with access to a range of essential activities and services including non-formal education (literacy and numeracy), life-skills training, basic medical care and basic psycho-social support (counselling), combined with games, drawing and sports. The number of individual children participating in different activities during outreach work has not been recorded. However, the cumulative number of children has been recorded and is likely to be proportionate to the number of individual children. The data table, opposite, shows figures for the second year of project implementation.

Utilization of key activities & services

Description	Contacts	Percent
Counselling/discussion	1863	32%
Literacy and numeracy	1887	32%
Basic medical care	546	9%
Life skills training	1540	26%
TOTAL	5836	100%

Data for the period July 2005-June 2006

Activities are well received by street children. Consultations with children for this review found that the content, location, timing and frequency of activities are appropriate. Children identified their favourite activities as drawing, playing sport and games, and reading folk stories.

The outreach team has successfully referred significant numbers of children to other services according to their particular situation, but almost all referrals (121 out of 129 in total) were to services within the Peuan Mit programme - 72% to the Drop-in Centre; 28% to the reintegration team. Only 8 children were referred to external services (mainly to hospital); additionally, several parents were referred to the Somsenga Drug Rehabilitation Centre. The limited number of referrals to other agencies reflects the lack of available services.

Output 2.3 - Children facing situations of violence and abuse receive support

The outreach team has identified and provided assistance in 39 individual cases of violence and abuse against street children, including several street children who had been beaten up (by other children), three girls who had been raped, several children detained by police without due reason, 7 young people released from prison suffering malnutrition, 6 teenage migrant girls working in a

²¹ Snapshot survey data and an analysis is included as an annex to this report.

²² The first project annual report recorded children's age as under or over 10 years old; the second annual report recorded children's age as under or over 15 years old.

²³ This data is only recorded in the project's second annual report, *2nd PCA Report (July 2005 to June 2006) to UNICEF LAO PDR*, September 2006.

beer shop who were believed to be sexually exploited, several cases of internal trafficking, and a number of squatter families who had been forcibly evicted by local authorities.

Street children detained in local prisons and the larger Somsenga Drug-Rehabilitation Centre have been visited by the outreach team every week in order to monitor their condition, provide emotional support and collect information with which to trace parents and other family members into whose care children could be released.²⁴

Output 2.4 - Street children have access to a safe area during the day and at night

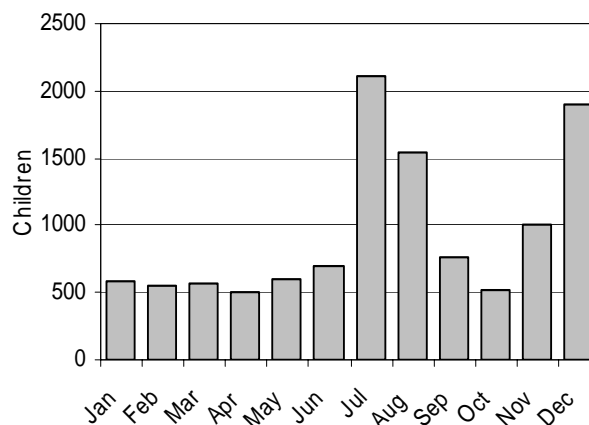
The Drop-in Centre, which opened in October 2004, comprises a team leader, 2 activity facilitators, 1 teacher, 1 medical supervisor, 2 house-fathers, 3 house-mothers, 2 cooks/cleaners, 1 part-time dance teacher and 1 volunteer assistant. The Centre is well located in a discrete but very central location in premises generously provided by the MoLSW. Space is limited - particularly for lodging, recreational activities and administration - and several staff, young people and LSW officials interviewed for this review called for a larger building. However, others emphasised that the small size serves as a natural limit on the number of street children that the project can handle, thereby encouraging reintegration and prevention efforts.

A significant number of street children have accessed the Drop-in Centre. During 2006, an average of 30 children per day were visiting during the day (up from 20 children per day during the first year of operations) and an average of 36 children were staying over night (up from 25 children per day in the first year). The total number of individual children accessing services is considerably higher since different children visit the Centre each day. This is reflected in data for the period April to June 2006 when the Drop-in Centre recorded a total of 229 individual children.²⁵

The children accessing the Drop-in Centre are representative of street children as a whole. The proportion of girls (41% in 2006) is consistent with the proportion of girls on the streets identified in periodic snapshot surveys. Likewise, the proportion of children under the age of 12 accessing the Drop-in Centre (51%) also corresponds closely to snapshot survey data (although different age groups are used in project reports, making an exact comparison difficult).²⁶

The number of children visiting the Drop-in Centre varies significantly during school holidays when many children from local neighbourhoods joined activities, and at times when police clamped down on street children and families in advance of international meetings, National Day and other events. The chart (right) shows how the number of ‘contacts’ per month²⁷ rose 4-fold during July 2005 when the 38th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting coincided with the end of year school break.

Drop-in Centre visitors, 2005



²⁴ In November 2006 there were 15 children in local prisons (Chantabouly, Sikkotabong and Tatdam) and 3 in Somsenga Drug Rehabilitation Centre.

²⁵ The number of individual children accessing the Drop-in Centre during other periods of time was not available.

²⁶ 2nd PCA Report (July 2005 to June 2006) to UNICEF Lao PDR.

²⁷ The number of ‘contacts’ represents a cumulative count of children visiting the Centre; the number of individual children has not been recorded.

Similarly, the number of children sleeping at the Drop-in Centre has varied, increasing significantly at the time of large national meetings and other special events due to police action to 'clean the streets'. For example, in November 2006, prior to the annual Tat Luang festival and in the run up to Lao National Day on December 2nd, up to 45 children slept overnight at the Centre compared to 36 on average during the whole of 2006.

Several members of the Centre team expressed concern that staffing levels at night are not sufficient to provide adequate supervision and quality care - particularly given the number of very young children (there were twelve children aged 3-6 years old during most of 2006). Two staff (one male and one female) are on duty at nights, with occasional support from day-time staff. However, recruitment of one additional staff member for nights/weekends was in progress at the time of this review. It may be noted that the night-shelter was originally foreseen as a short-term measure and perhaps for this reason the project had been reluctant to recruit additional full-time staff.

Output 2.5 - Street children have access to protective services through a drop-in Centre

The Drop-in Centre has provided street children with access to a wide range of services including sanitation, medical care, education, life-skills training, nutritious food, basic psycho-social support and recreational activities including games, sport, dance and art.

The number of individual children participating in different activities and utilizing different services at the Drop-in Centre has not been recorded. However, the cumulative number of children has been recorded and is likely to be proportionate to the number of individual children. The data table, opposite, shows figures for the second year of project implementation.

Children consulted for this review were very positive about services provided by the Drop-in Centre (see box, below). Since participation in activities and use of services is voluntary, the number of children accessing services and activities may also be taken as an indication of their relative utility from the perspective of street children.

Utilization of activities & services

Description	Contacts	Percent
Education	5,397	20.2
Sport	3,848	14.4
Bicycle repair	3,686	13.8
Painting	3,545	13.3
Dancing & acting	3,332	12.5
Games	2,725	10.2
Life skills	2,062	7.7
Clinic	1,389	5.2
Counselling	397	1.5
Haircut	214	0.8
Morning rest	89	0.3
TOTAL	26,684	100%

Data for the period July 2005-June 2006

A well-equipped classroom is staffed by a qualified teacher providing pre-school and primary level education to street children in three separate classes according to age and ability. Lessons include literacy, maths, science, history and geography, and follow national curricula to enable children to be enrolled in public school when they are ready. Lessons are kept short and make use of learning aids and active learning methodologies since many children are not used to formal learning environments and have very short attention spans.

A small clinic staffed by a full-time doctor provides high quality medical care to all children visiting the Drop-in Centre and sleeping overnight. The clinic is well-stocked with basic medicines and equipment, sufficient to deal with common health problems; more serious cases are referred to hospital. The doctor closely monitors the health of all children accessing the Centre

and provides advice to children and staff on health, hygiene and nutrition. She is available for consultations every morning and on-call throughout the day and night. In the afternoons she accompanies the outreach, reintegration and prevention teams to provide medical care to children and families on the streets and in local communities.

Life-skills training has been provided to all children staying at the Centre and to young people participating in the vocational training programme. A curriculum has been developed that includes topics on adolescent reproductive health, HIV/AIDS and STIs, drug abuse and hygiene. Life-skills training sessions were not taking place at the time of this review therefore no assessment of quality is possible. Work had begun on a set of highly visual training materials suitable for non-literate groups of street children but had not been completed because the life-skills coordinator left to take a position with another organisation; her replacement was undergoing training.

Results of interviews and focus group discussions with children and young people sleeping at the Centre

Children and young people particularly value good food, a safe place to sleep, medical care, education/vocational training, and recreational activities provided at the Drop-in Centre.

Several improvements were called for: to re-decorate the Centre with new paintings and murals; new clothes and shoes; pillows and a bigger space for sleeping; larger portions of food at breakfast; more sports and a bigger area for sports; table tennis and other sports equipment; regular sports tournaments with other groups of children and young people; and flexibility in applying the 9pm curfew, especially for those in vocational training.

Twelve out of eighteen respondents mentioned arguments and fighting among children at the Centre as a cause for concern – although they also said this is less of a problem now than in the past, in part because new rules, drawn up with their participation, lay down clear ground rules on the issue.

Children also identified positive changes in their lives including new friendships, acquisition of knowledge and skills, improved behaviour, better health and nutrition.

All but one respondent had a clear vision for the future and believed the Project can help them achieve it, which indicates a positive outlook on life that was not so evident among young people interviewed on the streets for this review.

Sample: 18 respondents (f=12) aged 10-18 years old staying at the Centre between 1 month and 2 years.

Outcome 3: Children living and working on the streets are reintegrated into society

Output 3.1 – Street children are reintegrated into a safe family environment

The total number of children reintegrated into families is relatively modest - 60 over a 2-year period – but at the time of this review several children had begun making regular weekend visits to their parents and extended family in preparation for full integration within the following few months.

The slow pace of family reintegration reflects the considerable time required to ensure placement is feasible, safe, in the child's best interest and sustainable - the project has found that rushing reintegration does not bring lasting results and may place children at risk.²⁸ Nonetheless, it is a point of concern that several children have been resident in the Centre for more than a year while waiting for placements with extended family members or guardians due to serious drug and other

²⁸ The project facilitated the rapid return of several children to their families during 2005 to keep them from being put in detention during Laos' chair of the ASEAN Standing Committee. Most of these children returned to the streets after a short time.

issues affecting their immediate family. It is expected that the development of national guardianship procedures and supporting legislation will enable these children to be placed into alternative family care.

Output 3.2 - Street children are assisted to go to school

A large number of street children have been assisted by Peuan Mit to enter/re-enter school. A total of 61 street children were enrolled in 28 public schools with support from Peuan Mit in September 2005. In September 2006, a further 123 children were enrolled in 42 different schools. These figures include children reintegrated into family care, street working children contacted by the outreach team and street children accessing emergency accommodation at the Drop-in Centre.

The process of school reintegration has been well-designed and well-implemented. Peuan Mit social workers first conduct consultations with children, parents and the school to ensure that commitment exists from all parties involved. If necessary, remedial education is provided at the Drop-in Centre. Children are then enrolled at a grade appropriate to their ability and, wherever possible, children are placed in a class with children of the same age since this has been found to lead to better learning outcomes. Peuan Mit pays the school registration fee and provides a school uniform, books and pens.

To ensure that children are not asked to pay miscellaneous activity, equipment and maintenance costs which are typically levied during the school year, Peuan Mit makes a contribution to the school of US\$6 for each child assisted, which must be used to purchase material or equipment that benefits all the children learning at the school. The total sum is usually quite small and is often used for teaching materials, sports equipment and books. However, in several cases where Peuan Mit has supported large numbers of children at one school, the school has been able to carry out significant improvements, including upgrading toilet facilities and installing running water.

Output 3.3 - Young people on the streets obtain vocational skills and are supported to find work

Peuan Mit opened a motorbike mechanics workshop in January 2006 and a training restaurant in October 2006. At the time of this review a total of 12 young people had begun mechanics training and 10 young people had begun training at the restaurant. Peuan Mit is committed to helping young people find paid employment upon completion of training and negotiations had begun with several local businesses. However, no trainees had yet graduated into full-time employment.

Although it is too early to make a detailed assessment of the vocational training scheme, several preliminary observations can be made:

- The total number of young people receiving vocational training will be relatively limited but the long-term impact on the lives of young people is expected to be considerable. The training restaurant will take up to 20 trainees, while the mechanics workshop has capacity for 12 young people. The duration of training will vary according to individual needs but is expected to take up to one year. Therefore, approximately 30 young people will benefit each year.
- Appropriate locations have been chosen for the training restaurant and mechanics workshop. The restaurant is in Vientiane's central tourist district while the mechanics workshop is situated on a main road close to one of the largest fresh-food markets in the city.
- Both training centres have been refurbished and equipped to a high standard. A complete set of second-hand equipment, in good condition, was bought for the mechanics workshop. The restaurant has been fitted out with high quality equipment and decorated in vibrant colours.

- Qualified trainers have been recruited and high-quality training curricula have been developed. Trainees are satisfied with the quality of training.
- Trainees are highly motivated by the opportunity to gain marketable skills. They are also confident about future career prospects once their training is complete.
- Both the restaurant and mechanics workshop are intended to be fully sustainable within 2 years.²⁹ The restaurant is expected to generate profit that will be used to support other components of the Peuan Mit programme.

Summary of focus group discussion with restaurant and mechanics trainees

- Trainees were highly motivated to acquire skills that open up prospects for future jobs. They commented that they are unable to access other vocational training schools because of intense competition for places, high tuition costs and educational pre-requisites.
- Young people were very enthusiastic about the training, which includes practical instruction, food hygiene and nutrition together with classes in Lao language, maths and life-skills.
- Trainees positively evaluated the quality of the teaching and the curriculum but emphasised the need for trainers to be patient and allow plenty of time to learn new information - all trainees have a low level of formal educational and several have learning difficulties relating to previous drug use.
- English classes have been provided to restaurant trainees but not to those in mechanics training since it is not an essential requirement for work in this field. However, like most young people in Vientiane, mechanics trainees said they want to learn English and asked for Peuan Mit to arrange classes.
- Trainees are confident they will be able to find work once they have completed training. Restaurant trainees have high aspirations – several said they hope to work in top-end hotels and restaurants.

Output 3.4 - Support provided to families of children reintegrated into family care and into school

Substantial support has been provided to the families of street children in an attempt to address the factors that led children onto the streets. In total, 96 families have received medical care, 41 families have received counselling/problem solving assistance and 21 families have been supported to increase household income through small business grants and participation in the home-based production scheme. Several families have also received assistance to improve living conditions (mainly to pay for minor roof and structural repairs).

Output 3.5 - The situation of children re-integrated into family and school is monitored

Peuan Mit staff have tracked the progress of all children supported to return to family care and to school through regular follow-up visits to meet children, their teachers and parents. The frequency of monitoring gradually reduces over time: once per week in the first month; once per month after 6 months; and once every two months during the second year. Follow-up normally ceases after 18 months but may be extended where necessary.

Follow-up monitoring and support visits over an extended period of time require significant resource inputs in terms of staff-time and travel budgets. During a 12 month period between July 2005 and June 2006 the reintegration team made a total of 1,796 follow-up visits – an average of 150 each month – to children in 28 different schools and as many different communities. One in ten visits was to children outside Vientiane Capital. Looking ahead, as more children are reintegrated into family care and school, and as their geographical dispersion increases, the project will need to ensure adequate resources are allocated for this work.

²⁹ The start-up phase has been grant-funded, therefore initial investment costs do not need to be re-paid.

Outcome 4: The number of new children coming on to the streets is reduced

Output 4.1 - Identification of children at-risk and development of prevention strategies

Information collected by the outreach team about where street living children originate from and where street working children return to at night has enabled Peuan Mit to identify several poor areas of Vientiane Capital and Vientiane Province that are home to children and young people at risk of entering street life. On this basis, community needs assessments have been conducted in four target areas with the participation of children, young people, parents, school directors, the chief of village, representatives of mass organisations at the village level and monks. The results of these needs assessments have been used to devise community development plans intended to reduce the number of new children coming on to the streets.

Within each targeted community, children and young people at-risk have been identified by the prevention team in consultation with community leaders and individually tailored support plans (case-management) have been devised after extensive consultations with children, young people and their families. The range of support provided to communities, individual children and families is listed in the box below and discussed in further detail as specific outputs relating to Outcome 4.

Summary of prevention strategies

- Support to out-of-school children to start/return to school and support to children identified by teachers as being at risk of dropping out of school.
- Non-formal education for out-of-school children to provide basic numeracy and literacy skills and to enable them to return to school (the 'mobile school').
- Life-skills training focussing on HIV/AIDS and reproductive health to reduce young peoples' vulnerability (the 'mobile school').
- Sports and games to provide children with recreational opportunities and improve community relations.
- Medical care and advice on hygiene and nutrition to ensure children are healthy enough to go to school and parents are able to work.
- Vocational training for out-of-school youth to provide alternatives to street work.
- Support to parents to set up small scale businesses, to find work and gain vocational skills.
- Counselling for children and families to help solve problems and identify situations of abuse.
- Individually tailored support plans (case-management) for highly vulnerable children incorporating some of the above responses as required.

Output 4.2 - At-risk children are assisted to go to school

Support has been provided to large numbers of vulnerable children who have recently dropped out of school or are at risk of dropping out of school to continue their education. During the school year starting September 2004 Peuan Mit supported 108 children to return to school or continue attending school (45 girls) and in the following school year supported a total of 171 children (83 girls).

School-support for vulnerable children follows the same rigorous procedures as support to street children reintegrated into school: a pre-assessment and consultation with children, parents and the school; remedial education where necessary; placement into an appropriate grade; and regular follow-up monitoring and support visits.

As was noted with respect to monitoring children reintegrated into family care and school, significant resources are required to monitor the large numbers of at-risk children supported to

attend school. Not only are an increasing number of children being supported, but the number of schools and their geographical dispersion across Vientiane Capital and Vientiane Province is increasing.

Output 4.3 - Vulnerable young people obtain vocational skills and are supported to find work

Vocational training has been provided to several young people in highly vulnerable situations (although most participants have been young people on the streets), but none had yet graduated into full-time employment. The number of vocational training places is expected to increase and more places will be made available to at-risk youth in the future.

Output 4.4 - At-risk children and young people have access to protective services

Community outreach activities have targeted five communities in Vientiane Capital and Vientiane Province, reaching approximately 450 children and young people each week at the time of this review. The main target is out-of-school children and young people who are considered at-risk of entering street life. However, children and young people already working on the streets also participate, which highlights the fact that ‘street children’ often defy easy categorization: many spend some of their time on the streets and some time at home with their family.

Community outreach activities provide a package of services including non-formal literacy and numeracy classes, life-skills training, medical care, counselling and recreational activities. The team comprises a qualified teacher, doctor, social worker and life-skills trainer. The proportion of children accessing different services (based on cumulative contacts per month) is shown in the table opposite.

Community outreach

Activity	Contacts	Percent
Non-formal education	13,317	55.8
Life skills training	4,857	20.3
Sport	3,178	13.3
First aid	2,312	9.7
Counselling	221	0.9
Total	23,885	100%

Data for period July 2005-June 2006

Non-formal education is delivered through the Peuan Mit ‘mobile school’ – a mini-van equipped with teaching materials and a qualified teacher. Lessons, which focus on literacy and maths, are conducted by a qualified and experienced teacher, incorporate active learning and child-centred teaching methods and follow the national curriculum to enable children to enter/re-enter school at a grade appropriate to their age.

The mobile school also conducts activities in several public schools where children have been supported to study by the prevention team and reintegration team. Initiated at the request of school directors, the aim is to introduce child-centred teaching methods and life skills topics to reinforce the delivery of quality education. Activities observed during this review were well received by children and teachers, especially life-skills classes and science demonstrations. However, there has been no monitoring of the impact on teaching quality and learning outcomes.

In addition to first aid treatment provided by members of the prevention team, the Peuan Mit doctor has frequently accompanied the mobile school during community outreach activities to provide medical consultations and advice on health issues including hygiene, nutrition, reproductive health and HIV/AIDS prevention. Serious cases have been referred to the clinic at the Drop-in Centre and to local hospitals. Several children have received financial support for life-saving medical treatment.

Recreational sports activities have been organised during visits by the community outreach team and sports boxes have been provided to four villages. Young people have been assigned

responsibility for the equipment, for making equipment available to children and young people in their community and for organizing regular sports activities. Peuan Mit has also organised special sports competitions in target communities twice per month since the start of 2006.

Monitoring mechanisms to effectively measure results of community outreach activities are not in place. However children and young people consulted during this review clearly enjoyed the activities and said they especially valued learning to read, drawing, painting, games, sport, first aid, and hygiene awareness. Parents and village officials also spoke positively about these activities and emphasised that many children of poor families would not otherwise be able to access medical care and education. It is also worth noting that most ‘at risk’ children supported by Peuan Mit to return to school did so after completing remedial classes with the mobile school.

Output 4.5 - Parents of at-risk children are supported

Peuan Mit has provided assistance to over 200 individual families in an effort to reduce the need for their children to earn money on the streets and enable them to attend school. Support has included counselling/problem solving, medical care, small business development grants, income-generating activities, life-skills education and short-term food support. Access to different forms of support (based on cumulative contacts over a 12 month period) is shown in the table opposite.

Support to families		
Description	Contacts	Percent
Problem solving	104	21.4
Medical care	97	20.0
Business development grants	55	11.3
Home based production	68	14.0
Life skills	125	25.8
Short term food support	36	7.4
Total	485	100%

Figures for period July 2005-June 2006

Families interviewed were very appreciative of the support provided, particularly problem solving, medical care and income generating schemes. Families involved in home-based production said that their income and quality of life had improved as a result. However, monitoring systems are not in place with which to precisely measure the impact of the support that Peuan Mit is providing to families of children at-risk.

Support to families has entailed a considerable amount of work by project staff to assess needs, discuss support options and to provide follow up advice. Between July 2005 and June 2006 a total of 565 visits were made to assess needs and discuss support options and a further 644 follow up visits were made – an average of 100 visits per month.

Output 4.6 - Preventative awareness-raising campaign

Peuan Mit has begun collaboration with the MoLSW and the Beggars Committee to design a publicity campaign to dissuade members of the public from giving money to beggars. In preparation for the campaign, a survey was conducted during September-October 2005 with 100 respondents to better understand the demographics of people giving money to children who beg and their reasons for doing so. Development of communication messages and materials is expected to take place in early 2007.

The survey found important differences between locals and tourists: most local residents and Asian tourists said they gave money out of ‘pity’, while most Western tourists said they gave because the children lack basic needs (food, clothing, housing, parental care, etc.) These differences suggest that different communication strategies will be required. Tackling the deeply engrained cultural attitudes underlying expressions of pity is likely to be particularly challenging.

However, highlighting the basic services provided to street children by Peuan Mit may be an effective means to discourage tourists from giving money. The challenge for Peuan Mit will be to ensure that sufficient human and financial resources are available to provide assistance that ameliorates the effects of reduced income from begging.

Peuan Mit has established contact with the 'Beggars Committee' of Vientiane Capital, an organisation comprising several local government authorities that is mandated to reduce the number of people begging on the streets of the city. As a result, Peuan Mit has received advance notification of several important national events which have previously been associated with the forcible removal of children and adults from the streets. The outreach team was then able to warn street children and street families about the consequences they would face if they remained on the streets in order to reduce the number of children detained by local authorities.

In August 2006 a workshop between Peuan Mit and the Beggars Committee resulted in an agreement for further collaboration providing the rights of street children (and adults) are respected. Specific proposals were discussed to reduce the number of children begging on the streets and to reduce the vulnerability of those that remain on the streets. To ensure ongoing collaboration, quarterly follow-up meetings were agreed and key contact persons within each organisation appointed.

3.2.2 Progress towards intended outcomes

It is too early in the project cycle to expect significant results at the level of intended outcomes.³⁰ At the time of this review, the Drop-in Centre had been operational for only two years and other programme components had been in place for considerably less time. Measuring results related to outcomes is challenging since an effective monitoring framework of indicators and means of verification at this level is not in place. Nonetheless, several promising examples of progress towards intended outcomes are noted below.

Social work capacity is developed for work with street children within the Project and among government counterparts.

Through a combination of training, mentoring and on-the-job experience, Peuan Mit social workers have developed core skills relevant to their responsibilities, an excellent understanding of street children issues and a passionate commitment to their work, despite long hours and modest pay. Several staff commented that they had strong initial prejudices against street children which dramatically changed through involvement in the project. The level of capacity achieved within Peuan Mit is particularly impressive given the lack of professional social expertise in the country.

However, Peuan Mit staff need further technical support and capacity building. As the *only* programme for children and young people on the streets in Lao PDR, it receives many cases covering a range of difficult situations - children in conflict with the law, using drugs, with physical and mental disabilities, with behavioural problems, and with mental health problems. The majority of staff said they needed further training and several requested specific training to equip them with skills to work with young people using drugs.

An increased understanding of social work methods and issues relating to street children is evident among officials at the MoLSW and Vientiane Capital Department of LSW. However,

³⁰ Results at the level of intended outcomes are usually measured after 3-5 years of project implementation.

capacity is concentrated in a small number of individuals and risks being lost if these staff leave or are transferred to other departments.

Less training has been conducted with local government officials and capacity for understanding and responding to street children issues was found to be correspondingly lower. Most District LSW staff, district police and village authorities interviewed for this review demonstrated a basic understanding of some of the reasons why children enter street life. However, several recommended responses that are not consistent with project objectives and child rights principles. There were suggestions, for example, that a large closed residential centre should be built far from Vientiane to reduce the 'problem' of street children in the city. The Somsenga Centre, a closed residential institution mandated to provide drug-rehabilitation services, was referred to as a good model.

Comments made by various district and village officials during the review illustrate a range of viewpoints:

"The problem stems from their family situation."

"I pity them because they don't have opportunities like normal children."

"These children harm the reputation of the city and the country."

"Street children take drugs and commit crime."

"They are like this because they are lazy."

"There is no solution: they cannot change what they do."

The establishment of social work systems and procedures within the project is a significant achievement. However, there has been limited progress in developing a national system of guardianship as a form of alternative family care. Moreover, social work systems and procedures have not been adopted by LSW staff at national, province or district level, where capacity and resource constraints have so far precluded significant social work activities.

Children living and working on the streets have access to services that protect them from harm and ensure the fulfilment of child rights as defined by the CRC.

Significant achievements have been made in fulfilling street children's right to protection, development, survival and participation through provision of a range of essential services including education, training, health care, counselling, and reintegration into school and family care. Peuan Mit is the *only* service provider addressing the needs of street children in Lao PDR and it may be reasonably concluded that these basic rights would remain unfulfilled had the project not been implemented.

Children, young people, parents and project staff consulted during this review identified concrete improvements in the health, education and emotional status of children and young people in contact with the project. Improvements in health status were attributed to access to first aid, medical care, washing facilities, provision of food and advice on nutrition. Many children said they have learnt to read and write through participation in outreach activities and classes held at the Drop-in Centre. Young people have also acquired knowledge through life-skills training about drug abuse, reproductive health and HIV/AIDS that can be expected to reduce vulnerability. Vocational training has begun to equip young people with marketable skills that will significantly improve livelihood options. Positive behavioural changes have been observed in children and young people staying at the Drop-in Centre, including improved self-confidence and social skills, less emotional instability and less aggression. Most young people sleeping at the Drop-in Centre were able to describe constructive plans for their future, which they believed would be achieved with support from Peuan Mit.

Nonetheless, street children remain highly vulnerable. Only an estimated 50% of all street children regularly access services provided by the Drop-in Centre and the outreach team. Moreover, the project continues to identify cases of violence against street children and, despite increased awareness by police officers and other local authorities of child rights principles, street children are still placed in detention quite frequently.

Children living and working on the streets are reintegrated into society.

The project has supported a modest but significant number of children to leave the streets and return to their family, has supported a large number of street children to return to school and assisted a smaller number of young people to gain vocational skills. Initial results are encouraging. Only a small number of children placed in family care have returned to the streets – generally due to issues of drugs in the family. The majority of street children supported to attend school have remained at school, but grade points suggest performance is an issue.³¹ Young people in vocational training have made good progress but are not yet ready to enter the labour market. The lasting impact of the reintegration programme – the number of street children who settle into a family environment, complete school and find decent jobs – will need to be measured over a longer time-period.

The number of new children coming on to the streets is reduced.

It is impossible to determine how many children would have entered street life had the project not existed but it may be significant that just 41 new street children were identified by the outreach team between July 2005 and June 2006 compared to 434 new street children in the previous 12 month period. However, this comparison is probably misleading since data for the first year includes many children who were already on the streets at the time the project began. Data collected in the coming years should provide a clearer picture of trends. It may also be viable to find out how long existing street children have been living or working on the streets in order to chart the number of children coming onto the streets in previous years.

3.2.3 Cost effectiveness

The project has achieved results with a relatively modest budget. Cost-effectiveness has been aided by significant government contributions: the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare has provided the premises for the Drop-in Centre free of charge and assigned two government staff to the project on a full-time basis; Vientiane LSW has also contributed one member of staff.

Summary of project expenditure January – September 2006:³²

- Total expenditure on programme implementation was US\$126,000.³³ A high proportion of total expenditure (78%) was associated with the delivery of activities and services. Administrative costs - including salaries of the office manager and finance assistant, office supplies and utility bills – were low (10%); 12% was related to staff training costs.
- The vocational training component accounted for 25% of total expenditure due to start-up costs including paying advance rent on premises, refurbishments, and purchasing equipment.

³¹ According to Peuan Mit records, 15% of children supported to enrol at school in September 2005 dropped out before the end of the year and 41% of children remaining at school scored low grades in end of year exams.

³² This is the most recent financial data available at the time of the review.

³³ The total expenditure figure and the analysis that follows excludes expenditure on technical support (25% of the total budget) since it was not possible to apportion these costs to different programme areas. The relatively high proportion of the budget allocated to technical support is reasonable given the novel nature of the project and the lack of local capacity; these costs are in line with the budget agreed in the project's MoU.

- Of the four other main project components, prevention activities accounted for the highest expenditure, followed by the Drop-in Centre, Reintegration and Outreach.
- Staffing costs account for 40% of total project expenditure and range from 29% to 51% across different project areas. The relatively high proportion of expenditure associated with salary costs is justified by the nature of the project: all key activities are based on face-to-face interaction between social workers, children and families. Individual salary costs for national staff are moderate, from \$130 to \$250 per month³⁴, which is within the normal range paid by NGOs operating in the country.

Total expenditure		Staffing costs	
Administration	10.2%	Overall	40%
Centre	15.0%	Centre	51%
Prevention	24.6%	Prevention	33%
Outreach	5.8%	Outreach	60%
Reintegration	7.6%	Reintegration	29%
Vocational training	24.9%		
Staff training	11.9%		
Total	100%		

Efficiency

The efficiency of different project components can be crudely assessed by comparing quantitative outputs achieved in relation to financial inputs. The results, presented in the table below, show that reintegrating children into the family and school has the highest per capita cost. The cost of support to children through other project areas is lower. Much of the project's work involves sustained interaction with children and young people over extended periods of time. Cumulative data showing the total number of contacts with children is available for outreach and prevention activities and has been used to calculate the cost per contact for these programme areas.

Cost-benefit analysis: January – September 2006

Component	Nmb of children	Cost per child	Cost per contact
Drop-in Centre (including nights)	600	\$32	Not available
Outreach	240	\$31	\$3
Prevention	653	\$44	\$2
Reintegration	138	\$56	Not available

Note: The number of individual children benefiting from different project activities was not always available in project reports and had to be complimented by estimates from project social workers, which reflects weaknesses in monitoring systems discussed elsewhere in this report.

³⁴ However, one staff member has left to seek better paid work; and one member of staff commented that he/she took a 30 percent salary to come to work with Peuan Mit.

3.3 Child and youth participation

The participation of children and young people in designing services and monitoring implementation has been a strong feature of the project. Prior to opening the Drop-in Centre, street children were consulted as part of a needs assessment in 2004.³⁵ Since then, a number of one-off initiatives and routine mechanisms have been implemented to ensure children and young people are able to participate in decisions about the project and other matters that affect them:

- A beneficiaries' evaluation was conducted in 2005, which consulted children, young people and their parents through individual and group interviews.
- Peuan Mit facilitated inputs by children and young people into the drafting of a new Children's Law, which is now being reviewed by the National Assembly.
- At the Drop-in Centre, weekly meetings are organized between children and project staff to discuss ideas for improving services; children have elected a youth representative to act as a focal point for staff-child dialogue and to follow up on key issues. A suggestions box is available for use by all children and young people (residents or visitors) using the Centre.
- Children and young people participated in making rules for the Centre, for the mechanics workshop and for the training restaurant.
- Creative expression has been consistently encouraged. Children helped to paint the Drop-in Centre with large outdoor murals and brightly coloured interior walls; a series of theatre workshops and public performances were conducted to promote expression and self-confidence while generating a positive image of street children³⁶, and the training restaurant was decorated with artwork specially created by street children.
- Interviews with Peuan Mit staff revealed a sincere commitment to meaningful participation by children and young people. During this review, Peuan Mit staff were proactive in ensuring children were able to contribute their ideas and experience and were instrumental in facilitating group discussions and interviews. It was evident that participation is facilitated through friendly relations between children and project staff in all programme areas.

³⁵ The previous year, in August 2003, Friends-International, MoLSW and UNICEF collaborated in organising a one-week photography workshop in which 28 street children (8 female) were provided disposable cameras and encouraged to document an aspect of their life. The striking results were used to support advocacy with government officials.

³⁶ The Strange and Nice Trip (April 2004); The Magic Door; The Giant Face (Aug 2005); My Dream (Feb 2006) were devised and performed by street children with support from performing arts trainers.

3.4 Management, monitoring and reporting

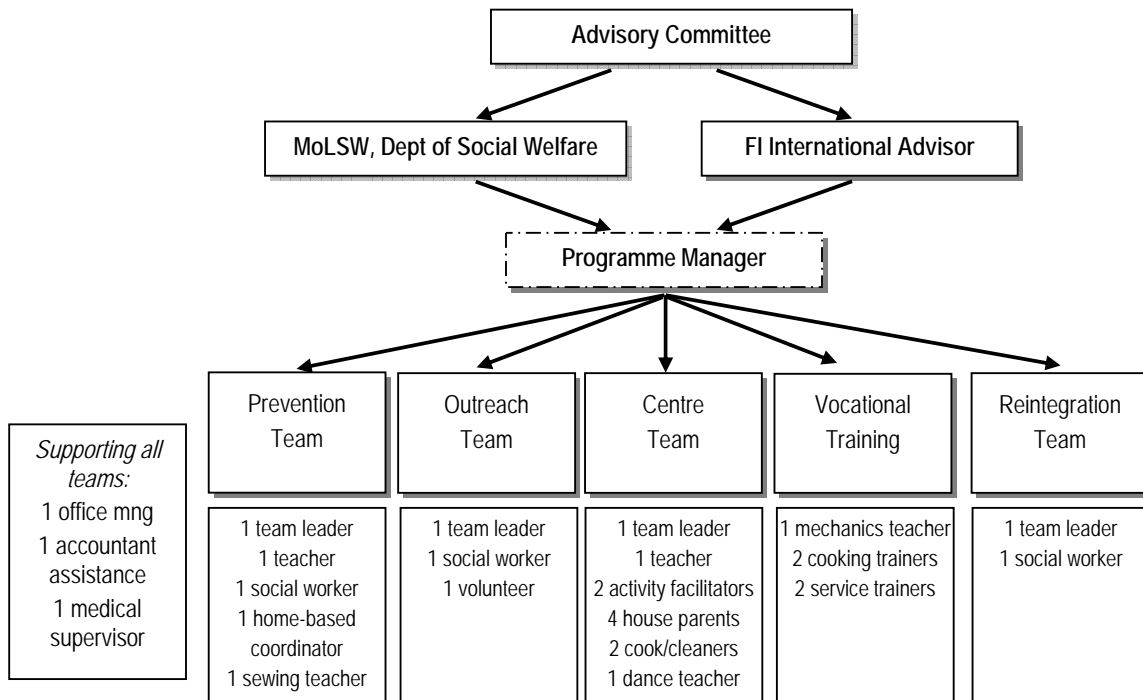
3.4.1 Management arrangements

Effective internal management systems have been put in place. Team leaders and the FI Project Coordinator meet together once-a-week to share updates on current activities, discuss problems and plan for the following week. Team leaders also meet with their staff once per week and work closely with them on a daily basis. Weekly activity schedules are developed by each team and posted on white boards in the office. A case management meeting is organised once-a-week to review difficult cases and share experience. Project staff consulted for this review were positive about management arrangements (see summary of results below).

Staff survey results relating to management issues:³⁷

- The overwhelming majority of staff agreed that team work is good (96%).
- All Peuan Mit staff (100%) can talk to their manager about problems at work.
- Many staff emphasised the need for a fully empowered Lao programme manager who can take decisions without continually referring back to the MoLSW for agreement, thereby speeding up administrative processes and general decision making.

Project management structure



The post of programme manager, intended to be filled by a MoLSW official, remains vacant despite exhaustive efforts to find a suitable candidate. This results in significant additional work for team leaders, the office manager and the FI Project Coordinator. Significantly, it also means project reports are not being translated into Lao, which may explain why some stakeholders are not fully aware of the range of project activities and results.

³⁷ Results of the staff survey are included as an annex to this report.

The project Advisory Committee has convened twice a year to monitor progress and provide comments and advice; the Advisory Committee also advocates for the project among a wide range of government and non-government agencies. Members include representatives from the MoLSW, Vientiane Capital Department of LSW, Friends-International, UNICEF, Aid et Action, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

3.4.2 Human resources

A highly motivated team has been established comprising 33 staff.³⁸ The gender balance is good in terms of absolute numbers and in terms of responsibility with 50% female staff overall and 3 female team leaders.

Two ethnic Hmong staff have been recruited (one with outreach team and one with the prevention team) in order to facilitate communication with the children from this ethnic group. These two staff also assist the Drop-in Centre and the reintegration team as necessary. Other languages spoken by Peuan Mit staff include Vietnamese and Chinese - both linguistic communities that are well-represented in Vientiane.

Human resource management systems are in place, including orientation training and probation systems for new staff, and regular performance reviews. However, some recently recruited staff do not yet have detailed terms of reference – although during interview they demonstrated a clear understanding of their responsibilities. Additionally, individual training plans are not yet in place.

Efforts to recruit a social work advisor to the project have not been fruitful. Basic social work training has been provided by the FI Project Coordinator and several advanced trainings have been organised with technical inputs from FI advisory staff in Cambodia. However, Peuan Mit staff would benefit considerably from in-house technical advice from a qualified and experienced social work professional for a period of at least one year.

3.4.3 Monitoring and reporting arrangements

Monthly, quarterly and annual progress reports provide stakeholders with detailed quantitative data and a thorough narrative description of project implementation, but there are several weaknesses associated with the underlying monitoring systems and methods of reporting:

- It is not always clear how many individual children and families are benefiting from the project since in many instances data shows the number of cumulative ‘contacts’ with children and families rather than the number of individual beneficiaries. The total number of contacts provides a useful indication of the intensity of project implementation but it is also vital to know how many individual children and families are involved.
- Impact monitoring mechanisms are limited. Most monitoring relates to processes related to outputs (e.g. the number of activities implemented and the number of children and families involved) rather than changes in the situation of children, families and wider context.
- Donors and other stakeholders commented that project reports are too long to digest. The length is partly due to the complexity of the project and the intense schedule of activities: there is a lot to report. But the repetition of results achieved during previous reporting periods is another factor, and makes each new report longer than the last - the quarterly report for the period July-Sept 2006 was 90 pages. The layout of project reports in a table format printed in landscape also contributes to length.

³⁸ A list of staff and posts is included as an annex to this report.

4 Conclusions and recommendations

This review found that the project has been well-designed and well-implemented. Considerable progress has been made in a short period of time to establish a comprehensive and holistic programme providing a wide range of activities and services. Significant output results have been achieved in all programme areas – Street Outreach, Drop-in Centre, Reintegration, Prevention and Capacity Building - and evidence was found that the various strategies and approaches adopted by the project have had a positive impact on the situation of vulnerable children and families. Through the delivery of planned outputs, progress has been made towards higher-level outcome results, particularly in terms of establishing social work capacity, reintegrating street children into society and ensuring the fulfilment of the rights of children living and working on the streets. A clearer view of outcome results will require a longer period of project implementation.

Achievements so far are impressive considering the lack of existing professional social work capacity in Laos, the limited range of complementary services for children in need of special protection, and the acute needs of the children and families supported. Results have been made possible by the dedication of project social workers and other staff, the high quality of technical assistance by Friends-International advisors, sustained support from the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, UNICEF and other stakeholders, and adequate financial contributions from donors including UNICEF, Aid et Action, and the governments of Australia and the Netherlands.

The project now needs to consolidate its existing programme of activities and strengthen certain areas to ensure that maximum results are achieved, focussing in particular on reintegration efforts, case management and capacity building with LSW stakeholders. Prevention work should take a lower priority until this has been achieved. Improved monitoring mechanisms will be needed throughout the project in order to demonstrate results in terms of impact on children, young people and families, and in terms of progress towards higher level outcome results.

The project is still in its infancy and requires additional inputs of time and resources to achieve sustainability. Mit Samlan, the street children programme in Cambodia established by Friends-International, converted to a nationally managed non-profit organization after 8 years of ongoing external support (after which external technical assistance was still required). Project stakeholders consulted during this review saw the need for considerable additional inputs of technical and financial support before Peuan Mit could feasibly become a locally managed programme.

There has been some discussion among stakeholders about the most effective long-term mode of operation for the programme established by Peuan Mit and options need to be assessed further. One option would be to transfer the entire programme to the MoLSW to manage and implement, but this would require significant human and financial resources that are not currently available. Alternatively, Peuan Mit could be established as a non-profit organisation (NPO) under the supervision of the MoLSW. However, legislation relating to NPOs is new and the future of this sector remains uncertain. Finally, it may be feasible to divide the programme among different government and INGO stakeholders, although there is a risk that this could undermine the coherence of the programme. A careful assessment will need to be made of different modalities, their feasibility, strengths and limitations.

It is the recommendation of this review that the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and Friends-International sign a second 3-year MoU for the period 2007-2010 to allow time for Peuan Mit to fully establish itself as a sustainable programme addressing street children issues in Lao

PDR. During this period, stakeholders will need to reach agreement on the best operating modality for Peuan Mit in the long term and ensure that relevant inputs are provided to ensure this goal can be attained.

UNICEF should continue to support Peuan Mit through provision of funds and technical assistance. For UNICEF, support for Peuan Mit has significant strategic value since the project provides insights into a range of key child protection issues including drug abuse, HIV/AIDS, alternative care, abuse and violence in the home, ethnicity, migration and resettlement, and lack of official documentation (many street children and families do not have ‘family books’, which record information on each member of the family and are required to process all kinds of official documentation, including residency papers; for children they are often the only form of official identification).

Further cooperation between MoLSW, Friends-International and UNICEF should take into consideration the recommendations presented below:

Reduce the number of children sleeping at the Drop-in Centre

The Drop-in Centre has limited space, staff and other resources available for children staying over-night. Given the lack of alternative emergency care options for street children, a short-term residential facility needs to be maintained. However, numbers of children lodging at the Centre need to be reduced from current levels to assure quality care³⁹. To achieve this will require a concerted effort to place children into family care whilst ensuring their reintegration is *voluntary, safe, sustainable, in the best interests of the child and consistent with other provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

Develop national guardianship procedures

Some children currently staying at the Centre cannot be returned to parental care because they are orphaned, risk abuse or neglect at home and do not have relatives able or willing to care for them. For these children, project stakeholders agree that alternative family care in the form of a guardianship arrangement is the best option in line with the CRC. A provision for guardianship exists in the Family Law and is planned for the forthcoming Children’s Law, but no procedures exist as yet. A guardianship system with rigorous procedures for pre-placement assessment and monitoring should be urgently developed and piloted by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare with technical inputs from Peuan Mit and UNICEF Child Protection Section. It will be essential to assess the human and financial resources required to put such a guardianship system into practice.

Strengthen the case management system

The number of cases currently handled by some case-workers is too high for quality to be assured and needs to be reduced to a realistic level. This might be accomplished through a review of all case files in order to identify which are most urgent for immediate action. The resulting priority cases should be distributed among social workers according to their individual capacity, bearing in mind that FI recommends no more than 10 cases per social worker. Case files need to be periodically audited to ensure that information is complete and up-to-date.

³⁹ Peuan Mit aims for a maximum of 20 children and no individual child resident for more than 18 months.

Review the scale of the prevention programme

The prevention programme, which grew rapidly in the project's second year, consumes a significant share of available financial and human resources. Reducing the number of new children coming on to the streets by addressing root causes is strategically sound, but care needs to be taken to ensure that this does not divert resources available for work with children already on the streets. At this stage, Peuan Mit needs to prioritize support to children already living and working on the streets through outreach work, the Drop-in Centre and reintegration efforts.

The prevention programme should focus on a limited number of communities where children are considered at high risk of becoming street children and consider the following:

- Support to vulnerable children to attend school as part of the prevention programme should be limited in light of the considerable resources required for pre-placement and follow-up work.
- The mobile school should concentrate on its original focus of community-based outreach work. These in-school activities are not a strategic priority for Peuan Mit and should not continue before other components of the programme are sufficiently resourced.

There is a real need for interventions supporting vulnerable groups of children and young people and the urgency of this issue will continue to increase given the rapid rate of urbanisation taking place in Vientiane Capital and other parts of the country. However, Peuan Mit cannot reasonably be expected to address the needs of all vulnerable groups of children and young people on its own. Peuan Mit and the MoLSW should focus on areas where children are at higher risk and actively advocate other organisations that have suitable capacity to implement complimentary programmes supporting vulnerable groups of children and young people. In doing so it will be important that the MoLSW ensures new initiatives complement the work of Peuan Mit.

Ensure vocational training focuses on the most vulnerable young people and is gender sensitive

The limited number of vocational training places should be prioritized for young people living and working on the streets. At the time of this review, several young people identified as at-risk during community prevention activities had joined vocational training. It would be preferable for at-risk youth to be referred to external vocational training services. The requirement of many such services for relatively high literacy, numeracy and general educational levels would present a challenge, but could be overcome through remedial classes.

The gender balance in vocational training needs to be monitored since currently almost all trainees are male. Given cultural norms, mechanics training is unlikely to attract many female street children. Hospitality training at the restaurant is more gender-neutral, but at the time of this review only one trainee was female (two others had recently stopped attending). Peuan Mit should consider whether additional vocational training options are needed to ensure equitable access for girls.

Address gaps in human resources

The post of project manager needs to be filled urgently. A suitable candidate has been sought within the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare but without success because all Departments are extremely short-staffed and currently unable to recruit new personnel. In November 2006 the project Advisory Committee agreed that if a suitably qualified and experienced project manager could not be identified with the MoLSW or another Ministry, then recruitment from the private sector would be an option. It is recommended that a decision on this be taken as soon as possible.

It has not been possible to find a suitably qualified and experienced social work advisor to support capacity development within the project. Peuan Mit, with support from UNICEF, should try to fill this position as soon as possible.

All team leaders interviewed for this review raised staffing levels as an issue. Particular shortages were identified in the Centre team – particularly at nights and weekends – and in the reintegration and in the outreach teams. Peuan Mit is currently seeking to recruit new staff to meet some of these gaps. A slightly reduced prevention programme, as suggested above, might also allow a re-allocation of staff to these programmes that work directly with street children. Peuan Mit should also consider engaging volunteers as activity facilitators during school holidays when the number of children accessing the Drop-in Centre rises significantly – students of the new Social Science Bachelors degree at the National University of Laos, which includes modules in sociology, social development and social work, might be suitable candidates.

Increase participation of LSW officials, education officials and school directors

Ideally, additional staff from the MoLSW and Vientiane Capital Department of LSW should be assigned to the project to secure long term sustainability and build capacity within the GoL. However, severely limited numbers of staff within government structures at all levels mean that this is unlikely. Nonetheless, greater involvement of government officials in project activities is possible. In particular, LSW officials should be more actively involved in monitoring children who have been reintegrated into families with a view, in the longer-term, to taking the lead in pre-placement assessments and case management. Similarly, school directors and staff of district education offices should take the lead in monitoring the progress of street children reintegrated into school. Such a role is consistent with the principles of the Child Friendly Schools initiative, adopted by the Ministry of Education and supported by UNICEF, which emphasizes that schools have a duty to ensure the fulfilment of children's right to education. Greater involvement by local officials at the province and district level would reduce the workload for Peuan Mit social workers while simultaneously building national capacity and sustainability.

Strengthen coordination, collaboration and networking

Coordination between Peuan Mit and stakeholders is generally good but could be improved. A periodic workshop held in each district of Vientiane Capital targeted by Peuan Mit would provide a useful forum to review project activities, ensure a common understanding of the project and encourage networking among stakeholders. Participants should include District LSW officers, and Education officers, village committee members, teachers, parents and young people. There is also a need to strengthen linkages between Peuan Mit and several relevant GoL initiatives, including those supported by UNICEF such as juvenile justice, child protection networks, social work training and child friendly schools.

Provide capacity building and technical support to Savannakhet LSW officials

A significant number of street children come to Vientiane Capital from Savannakhet province and Peuan Mit has taken some steps to assess the support needs of source communities. Peuan Mit does not have sufficient resources to implement a programme in Savannakhet, but could provide training to help develop the capacity of staff in Provincial Departments of LSW and District LSW offices to better understand issues relating to street children, to undertake outreach work and to identify preventative measures. This would be an important step in expanding basic social work capacity to other parts of the country.

Develop an advocacy and communication strategy on street children issues

An advocacy and communication strategy should be developed targeting the general public, police and local officials to encourage more positive attitudes towards street children and reduce prejudice, discrimination, and violence. The strategy should include awareness-raising on the reasons why children live and work on the streets and the vulnerabilities associated with street life. It should highlight the support provided to street children by Peuan Mit and the Ministry of LSW and highlight concrete examples of children and young people who have successfully reintegrated into family, school, training and work. The strategy should also aim to dispel persistent myths about street children – such as: they are lazy, begging is an easy way to earn money, parents of children on the street grow wealthy on their child's income, and street children are controlled by gangs.

Improve monitoring and reporting

Monitoring systems need to be improved to provide data that provides a clearer picture of project achievements. The number of individual children (unique count) accessing each activity and service needs to be recorded as well as the total number of contacts (cumulative count). Baseline data needs to be collected and benchmarks set in order to demonstrate the impact of the project on children and families in all programme areas. Mechanisms also need to be devised to measure results in terms of intended outcomes.

Reports should be streamlined and improved by reducing the number of detailed tables of data and using charts to show trends over time. Quarterly reports could be shortened considerably by including only significant developments during the current reporting period. A detailed description of all activities, outputs and results over the period of project implementation should be reserved for annual reports.

Annex 1 - Results Chain

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts
Human resources Financial resources Materials and Supplies	Development of social work capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team of skilled social workers able to work with street children • Government officials at central and local level integrated into project activities • Social work systems, standards and procedures are developed and in use 	Social work capacity is developed for work with street children within the Project and among govt counterparts.	<p>Less children living and working on the streets.</p> <p>Street children enjoy fundamental rights as defined by the CRC.</p> <p>National capacity to provide support to children in need of special protection (CNSP)</p>
	Provision of essential services to street children. <i>Project teams: Outreach Drop-in Centre Vocational Training</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street children are accessed through outreach work and a Drop-in Centre • Improved understanding of the situation of children on the streets through observation, consultation and surveys • Children participate in designing and monitoring activities and services. • Street children access hygiene services, health care, non-formal education, life-skills training, vocational training, nutritious food, emergency accommodation, recreational opportunities, basic psycho-social support • Children facing situations of violence and abuse receive support 	Children living and working on the streets have increased knowledge, skills and access to services that reduces their vulnerability and ensures the fulfilment of basic child rights as defined by the CRC.	
	Placement of children into family, school and work <i>Project teams: Vocational Training Reintegration</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are reintegrated into a safe family environment (direct family, extended family or guardianship) • Children are supported to return to school • Young people obtain vocational skills and are supported to find work • Follow up support provided to all children, young people and their families 	Children living and working on the streets are reintegrated into society.	

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts
	<p>Preventative interventions targeting children and families at risk of entering street life.</p> <p><i>Component 4: Vocational Training;</i></p> <p><i>Component 6: Prevention</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased understanding of factors pushing children into street life and identification of prevention strategies • Community needs assessments conducted and community development plans designed • At-risk children and young people access life-skills training, non-formal education, vocational training, psycho-social support and recreational opportunities • At-risk children are supported to attend school • Parents of children at-risk are supported to increase their income, improve their living conditions and access medical care • Preventative awareness-raising campaigns launched 	<p>The number of new children coming on to the streets is reduced.</p>	

Annex 2 – Documents reviewed

Project planning documents

MoU between the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and Friends-International concerning 'Building a sustainable street children project in Lao PDR', signed and dated 19th May 2004.

Narrative of activities during proposed extension to 2nd PCA with Friends International for the period Jun-December 2006, Friends International, March 2006.

Project Log frame for the first year of project implementation (starting June 2004).

Project proposal to MoLSW by Friends International, undated (c.2003-2004).

Street Children and Child Beggars, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Department of Social Welfare, & UNICEF, 2001.

Support to prevention and reintegration of street children in Lao PDR (1 year project) – A proposal to UNICEF, Peuan Mit, June 2005.

Project reports

1st Year Report (July 2004-June 2005) to MoLSW, Peuan Mit, Sept 2005

2nd PCA Report (July 2005-June 2006) to UNICEF Lao PDR, Peuan Mit, Sept 2006.

Quarterly project reports for the period July 2004 – Sept 2006

Audit Report for Friends International (Peuan Mit) for the period 19th May 2004 to 31st May 2005, NPK Auditors and Consultancy Company Limited, 10 June 2005.

Evaluation of Peuan Mit activities by its beneficiaries, Peuan Mit, Aug 2005.

Knowledge Attitude Practice Survey - Drug use among street children in Vientiane, Lao PDR, Peuan Mit, 2005.

Peuan Mit End of Year 1 Evaluation, Friends-International, April 2005.

Report of review meeting between Thongkhankham village and Peuan Mit, 21 Feb 2006.

Report of workshop on school follow-up of children with special needs, Jan 2006

Report on meeting between the Beggars Committee and the Peuan Mit street children project, Peuan Mit, 17 March 2006.

Report to UNICEF on support to street children and beggars related to the 38th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting (AMM) during July-Sept 2005, Peuan Mit, Sept 2005.

Report to UNICEF on support to street children and beggars related to the ASEAN Summit during Oct-Dec 2004, Peuan Mit, Sept 2005.

Reports on the proceedings of Advisory Committee Meetings (Jan 2005, 26 Apr 2005, 11 Oct 2005, Jan 2006, Nov 2006)

Survey on families from Savannakhet Province begging on the streets of Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR, Peuan Mit, 2005.

UNICEF Supported Street Children Activities Monitoring Report, UNICEF Lao PDR internal report, March 2005.

Workshop report: 'Collaboration between the Beggars Committee and the Peuan Mit street children project for working with beggars in Vientiane', Peuan Mit, 30 Aug 2005.

Strategies and policy documents

Analysis of Situation of Labour and Social Welfare in Lao PDR, MoLSW, unofficial draft dated July 2006.

Common Country Assessment, GoL & UN, December 2000.

Draft Law on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Children, March 2006.

Master Plan of Operations (Country Programme of Cooperation) 2002-2006, Government of Lao PDR/UNICEF, December 2001.

Labour and Social Welfare Development Policy for the Year 2020, 2010, and 2005, endorsed by GoL on May 24-26 May 2001

Master Plan of Operations 2002-2006, GoL & UNICEF, December 2001

Millennium Development Goals: Progress Report Lao PDR, GoL & UN, January 2004.

National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy (NGPES), Government of Lao PDR. Excerpts relevant to CP. No date.

National Socio-Economic Development Plan, Committee for Planning and Investment, Vientiane, October 2006

Plan of Action on Street Children and Child Beggars in Lao PDR, MoLSW, November 2001.

Project Plan of Action: S004 Strengthening Social Protection System (Year 2005) Programme Cycle 2002-2006, UNICEF, 21 March 2005.

UNICEF Medium-term Strategic Plan (2002-2005), 7 November 2001 (E/IECF/2001/13).

UNICEF Mid-Term Strategic Plan (2006-2009), 11 July 2005 (E/IECF/2005/11).

United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) Lao PDR 2002-2006, UNDP and GoL, July 2002, p82

Evaluation resources

Evaluation Report Standards, UNICEF, New York, Sept 2004.

Evaluation Technical Notes, UNICEF Evaluation Office, April 2002.

Understanding Results Based Programme Planning and Management - Tools to Reinforce Good Programming Practice, UNICEF Evaluation Office, Sept 2003.

Wilkinson, J., Children and participation: research, monitoring and evaluation with children and young people, Save the Children UK, 2000.

So You Want to Consult with Children – a toolkit of good practice, International Save the Children Alliance, November 2003.

Annex 3 – Field visits and informants

Summary of informants

Children and young people

23 children sleeping in the Centre	Focus groups
20 children visiting the Centre for Drop-in activities	Individual and group interviews.
9 children participating in community prevention activities (mobile school)	
2 children re-integrated into families	
9 children in schools visited by the mobile school	
25 children participating in Street Outreach	
4 young people training in the mechanics workshop	
8 young people training in the restaurant	
Total: 100	

Adults

17 Peuan Mit staff *	Individual interviews; some group interviews. <i>*26 Peuan Mit staff completed a self-administered check-list survey.</i>
6 LSW officials at MoLSW and District LSW offices	
4 Friends-International staff (FI Director, FI Coordinator, 2 advisors)	
4 Village heads	
3 District police officers (Watchan Group Police Office)	
5 Staff of international agencies (including UNICEF and Aid et Action)	
8 School Directors and teachers (5 schools)	
8 Women involved in home-based production and 3 husbands (3 villages)	
10 shop-keepers and restaurateurs in areas frequented by street children	
Total: 65	

Field visits – observation and data collection

Project activity	Location
Street outreach	Ban Watchan
Street outreach	National Stadium
Street outreach	Ban Phongsavanh (Phontong)
Support to children in detention	District prison
Remedial education	Drop-in Centre
Recreational activities	Drop-in Centre
Medical care	Drop-in Centre
Peuan Mit team leader meeting	Drop-in Centre
Case management meeting	Drop-in Centre
Community outreach (mobile school)	Ban Nongdoug Tong
Community outreach (mobile school)	KM 18
Vocational training	Motorbike repair shop
Vocational training	Mak Phet restaurant
Restaurant grand opening	Mak Phet Restaurant
Family reintegration	Ban Gaoleow
School reintegration and support	Ban Hoakhoua
School reintegration and support	KM 52, Vientiane Province
Home-based production	Ban Hoa Khoua
Home-based production	Ban Thongkamkan

Annex 4 – Assessment tools

The following questionnaires, interview guides, group discussion guides, and self-administered forms were developed for the assessment:

- Group discussion guidelines for children and young people staying at the Drop-in Centre
- Group discussion guide for young people participating in vocational training
- Questionnaire for children staying overnight at the Drop in Centre
- Questionnaire for beneficiaries of outreach and prevention activities
- Interview guide for local government stakeholders
- Questionnaire for use with project staff
- Self-administered form to record HR information from project staff
- Self-administered check-list form for project staff

Copies of all assessment tools (in Lao and English) have been placed on file with Peuan Mit and UNICEF.

Annex 5 - List of staff and positions

Outreach Team

Ms. Ketsone Philaphandeth	Outreach Team Leader
Ms. Khampan Meauvong	Social Worker
Mr. Yuan Yeng	Volunteer

Centre Team

Mr. Tingkham Khounsouvanh	Centre Team leader
Ms. Khamla	Teacher
Mr.Thornkeo	House Father
Mr. Thongdy Keomisay	House father weekend
Ms. Tik Sianong	Cook/Cleaner
Ms. Ammone	Cook/Cleaner
Ms. Ko	House mother
Ms. Soukvilay	House mother
Ms. Oulayvanh	House mother weekend
Mr. Khammai Sikhamxay	Activity facilitator
Ms. Nithasone	Activity facilitator
Ms. Khanthasone Manirath	Medical supervisor
Mr. Lam	Part time dance teacher

Vocational training

Mr.Bounmy Savaththongdy	Mechanics Teacher
Mr.Sisavai Phothichak	Serving Teacher
Mr.Kavisack	Cooking Teacher
Mr.Khamsene Latsavong	Serving Teacher
Ms.Luangnaphan	Cooking Teacher

Prevention

Mr.Thongkham Mougsinghot	Mobile school social worker
Mr.Ounchanh Vongsamphan	Mobile School's Teacher
Mee Yuan Yang	Life skills trainer
Ms.Southanong	Cashier (Home-based production)
Ms. Tik	Sewing trainer (part time)
Mr. Isoon Soukvisay	Social Worker

Reintegration

Ms. Bouavone Boualivong	Reintegration Team leader
Mr. Bounxay Moua	Social Worker

Administration

Pierre Louis Leroy	Program Coordinator
Ms.Thongsavanh Tansery	Office Manager
Ms.Deuanpheng	Accountant

Government counterparts

Mr. Douangsy Thammavong	MoLSW Counterpart
Mr. Vilaykorn	Vientiane DLSW Counterpart

Currently recruiting

Guard for restaurant
English teacher
Trainers x 2
Night staff
Program manager

Team

Restaurant
Restaurant
Restaurant
Centre
Management

Annex 6– Snapshot surveys

Since July 2004 ‘snapshot’ surveys have been conducted every few months to provide up-to-date information on the situation of street children. These surveys have been used to identify significant trends (changes in the number of street children, gender, age, activities on the street, etc.) to inform the design of outreach work and other components of the project.

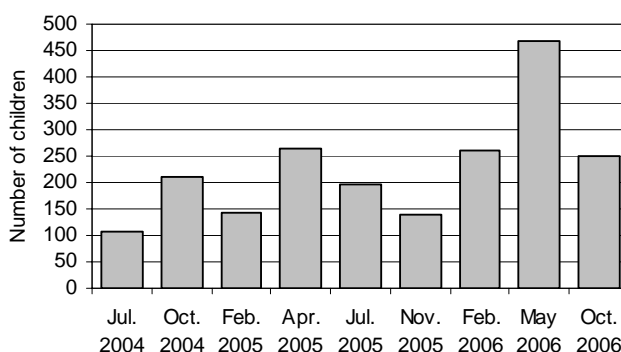
There is no clear trend in the number of street children identified in each survey. Figures are affected by seasonal and other factors. For example, rice shortages at the end of the dry season prompts an in-flow of street families from rural areas; during school holidays more children try to earn money collecting scrap and selling food-items on the

street; conversely, police action prior to important national events leads to a reduction in the number of children and families on the streets. The highest recorded figures were in May 2006 when children were on school-holiday and Peuan Mit sent out an extra survey team. The average number of street children recorded in each surveys is 227; excluding data for May 2006 gives an average of 197.

Overall, between July 2004 and November 2006, nearly two out of three street children were boys, one in three were under 10 years old and the vast majority were working on the streets – collecting scrap, selling snacks and balloons, washing dishes and serving in restaurants. The ratio of boys to girls recorded in each snapshot survey remained fairly constant at just under 2 to 1.

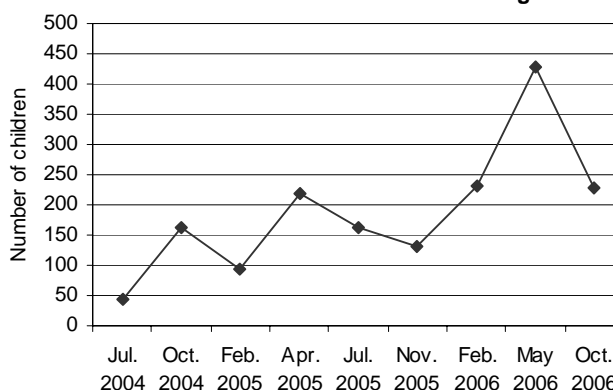
Analysis of the data shows no significant changes in age distribution or gender over time, although there does appear to have been an increase in children working on the streets between July 2004 and November 2006 (see chart, right). It is unclear whether this reflects a significant trend. It may simply be the case that more working street children have been recorded over time as the outreach team has become more familiar with locations where they work.

Number of street children identified



Gender:		Age group:		Situation:	
Boys	62%	< 10	34%	Street living	7%
Girls	38%	11-15	41%	Street working	80%
Total	100%	> 15	25%	Street family	13%
		Total	100%	Total	100%

Number of street working children



Snapshot survey data

Raw numbers

Date	Gender			Age group				Type of street child			
	Boys	Girls	Total	< 10	> 10	> 15	Total	Street living	Street working	Street family	Total
Jul. 2004	72	34	106	57	31	18	106	1	44	58	103
Oct. 2004	126	83	209	69	88	52	209	15	163	28	206
Feb. 2005	95	48	143	42	70	31	143	22	95	26	143
Apr. 2005	153	112	265	112	95	58	265	26	219	19	264
Jul. 2005	123	74	197	66	87	44	197	28	163	8	199
Nov. 2005	84	57	141	42	66	33	141	7	132	2	141
Feb. 2006	168	94	262	60	93	104	257	12	231	19	262
May 2006	289	178	467	141	219	107	467	12	429	26	467
Oct. 2006	149	101	250	76	99	75	250	10	229	10	249
Average	140	87	227	74	94	58	226	15	189	22	226

Percentages

Date	Gender			Age group				Type of street child			
	Boys	Girls	Total	< 10	> 10	> 15	Total	Street living	Street working	Street family	Total
Jul. 2004	68	32	100	54	29	17	100	1	43	56	100
Oct. 2004	60	40	100	33	42	25	100	7	79	14	100
Feb. 2005	66	34	100	29	49	22	100	15	66	18	100
Apr. 2005	58	42	100	42	36	22	100	10	83	7	100
Jul. 2005	62	38	100	34	44	22	100	14	82	4	100
Nov. 2005	60	40	100	30	47	23	100	5	94	1	100
Feb. 2006	64	36	100	23	36	40	100	5	88	7	100
May 2006	62	38	100	30	47	23	100	3	92	6	100
Oct. 2006	60	40	100	30	40	30	100	4	92	4	100
Average	62	38	NA	34	41	25	NA	7	80	13	NA

Annex 7 - Results of Peuan Mit staff survey

In addition to individual interviews with key staff members, all 33 project staff were asked to complete a questionnaire largely comprising check-list questions. To ensure anonymity respondents were asked to return the completed questionnaire in a sealed envelope provided. The results presented here are based on the 26 staff who returned their questionnaires to the review team.

	Agree strongly %	Agree %	Disagree %	Disagree strongly %
About your job				
I like my work	76	24	0	0
The work I do is interesting	68	32	0	0
My job is difficult	24	68	8	0
I have too much responsibility	16	26	28	0
I want more responsibility	8	42	46	4
The training from Peuan Mit is of good quality	60	40	0	0
I have all the skills I need to do my work	24	72	4	0
I need more training to do this work	72	16	12	0
I am satisfied with my salary	0	24	68	0
Resources				
The number of staff is adequate	0	28	56	16
We have enough material and equipment	0	20	72	8
We have enough office space	24	56	20	0
We have enough space for activities at the Centre	0	17	54	29
Management and team work				
Team work is good	12	84	4	0
Team work needs improvement	52	44	4	0
I can talk to my manager about problems at work	40	60	0	0

	All the time	Sometimes	Rarely
Collaboration with stakeholders			
MLSW gives good support to Peuan Mit	72	28	0
Vientiane LSW gives good support to Peuan Mit	60	40	0
Village authorities gives good support	36	64	0
Police give good support to Peuan Mit	42	54	4
Families give good support to Peuan Mit	36	56	8