Exploring indigenous knowledge to adapt the relevant education curricula to support ethnic minority children's better learning"
Plan International in Vietnam

Vision
Plan International envisions a world in which all children realize their full potential in societies that respect people’s rights and dignity.

Plan International Vietnam
• Since 1993
• Country office based in Hanoi
• Field offices in 11 provinces across the North and Central Vietnam
• Serving the most marginalized and vulnerable children, particularly girls and ethnic minority children in remote and mountainous areas
Child Education in the ethnic minority areas

Vietnamese, as the only language of instruction in the classroom, presents language barriers for most ethnic minority children

- Curriculum and learning materials do not reflect the culture and history of ethnic minority groups
- Deficit of child-friendly learning environment
- Teaching methodology is not yet child-centered and teachers have poor capacity in active teaching
- Parents and communities have limited involvement in children’s education
Why indigenous knowledge is important?

• Indigenous knowledge (IK) provides the basis for problem-solving strategies for local communities, especially the poor.

• IK is an under-utilized resource in the development process. Learning from IK, by investigating first what local communities know and have, can improve understanding of local conditions and provide a productive context for activities designed to help the communities.

• EM children can learn better if the education curriculum, teaching methods, learning materials are familiar to their culture and daily life.
Our program initiatives

- Improve teacher’s capacity in application/contextualization of preschool and primary education curricula relevant to the local context and EM children’s learning characteristics

- Promote initiatives in using the indigenous knowledge in teaching/learning material development

- Community based child early stimulation and learning initiatives
Teacher capacity process

Guideline (1) ➔ TOT (2) ➔ Roll out (3) ➔ Practice (4)

Teacher professional development via regular school based meetings (child focus, lesson study)

Coaching & monitoring to promote application by teachers
Areas of teacher’s initiatives

- Language assistance
- Mobilization of children to school
- CFL environment
- CWD inclusion
- ATL application
- T/L aids development
Promote initiatives using indigenous knowledge in teaching/learning material development

What teaching/learning materials include:

- Different materials, toys, teaching aids that support teachers and children in education activities and developed based on the local culture and indigenous knowledge.

Purposes:

- Teachers and children use as teaching/learning aids to support preschool and primary education curriculum and their creativeness/innovation.
- Promote active learning from children since they learn in friendly learning environment which is familiar to their culture and daily life.
- Contribute to strengthen Vietnamese skills for EM children.
- Preserve local EM cultures.
Learning materials developed exploring indigenous cultures
Desk review
- Education curricula; EM researches

Field research
- collect stories, poems, songs, games from EM groups

Material development/adaptation

Printing and dissemination

Training of users

Process

- Teachers
- Local Officers in charge of culture
- Village elderly, influential people in the communities
- Children
- Parents, villagers
Some initial comments on the materials

“Children are so excited to see that the characters in the tall stories that are usually told show up in the comic books. They discuss with each other about the clothes of the brother, about the fox being able to sing… and ask me a lot information about each character.” (Thao Vang Pao, volunteer of the children group)

“We didn’t know that we are inheriting such a valuable cultural treasure. These materials help us to understand that there are not only two ethnicities including Dao and H’mong, but many other ethnicities having songs, and stories that can be used as teaching materials in preschool to promote children’s better learning.” (Ms. Tran Kim Thinh, head of Early Childhood Department of Ha Giang Province)
Community based initiatives

- Parenting group
- Child play & reading group
- Under 3 years parenting groups

Improved capacities of community based volunteers network
Parenting education to promote their support to child learning at home and school

• Language support, especially during the period when school year starts

• Help teachers organize education activities related to IK, local production work (especially application of developed materials using the IK)

• Support child groups activities in the communities

• Help children learn at home through storytelling, song singing using IK
Children(U3) play group

- Includes parents and their children 0-3 years old, living in the same village.
- Is led and managed by parents/ community volunteers
- Exposes young children to a stimulating home and/or center-based environment.
- Promotes positive indigenous and other child care early stimulation practices
- Is a forum for learning about and testing new practices.
- The parenting groups can be the source of volunteers to organize play groups for children to stimulate early learning through play activities
Child play-reading group

- **Enables** children 4-11 years old to discuss and address community issues and topics of importance to children

- **Empowers children** to explore their own development and increase their self-confidence through social interaction and becoming more active community members

- **Improves** children’s language skills (through communicating with others, reading books)

- **Is facilitated** by trained community members who will support the key children facilitating the groups.
Lessons learned

• Children learn much easier and more effectively
• Children are more confident and active since participating in both class, school, and community activities
• The curriculum content is richer and more relevant
• Teachers are more confident in teaching, working with EM children, then quality of teaching is more effective
• Children, school, parents, community have sounder understanding of and are proud of sustaining and further developing their culture
• Linkage between school, families, community is closer and more tangible
Experiences from the program

- Program interventions should be culturally and locally appropriate (via promotion of positive deviance, connecting with existing resources)
- Program is owned and managed by community
- Along with providing information, a supportive environment should be created, and connected with available services providers to support parents’ application of new skills (BCC)