

Child Protection

(Last reviewed September 2015)

One Sky's Child Protection project works to tackle risks posed to children in Sangkhlaburi by abuse, neglect and poverty.

We do this by focusing on two key areas: **immediate protection** and **risk reduction**.

Protection from immediate harm:

We protect children from immediate harm by:

- **Removing children from situations where they are at immediate risk.** One Sky's Director is the only person in Sangkhlaburi to have completed the Thai government's Child Abuse Investigator training, giving him the authority to remove a child from a dangerous situation for up to seven days. In 2014 One Sky removed nine children from situations of torture, sexual abuse and severe neglect. In all cases we work closely with the government's Provincial Social Services team – based three hours away from us in the city of Kanchanaburi – aiming to complement their services.
- **Offering counseling to children and families who have suffered abuse or other harms.** One Sky has a carefully planned and arranged counselling room that offers a safe, quiet and confidential space for those needing counselling support.
- **Promoting family-based solutions for children removed from dangerous situations.** Whenever we are involved in the removal of a child from a dangerous situation we work hard to keep them with their extended family or in a family environment. This is a central goal of our Alternative Care project.
- **Advocating for full implementation of the Thailand 2003 Child Protection Act*, to allow for conviction of dangerous offenders.** While One Sky can bring children to safety, we are currently unable to pursue convictions of offenders, as should be allowed under the Thai Child Protection Act. Full implementation of the 2003 Child Protection Act will require commitment from all official partners, including local police forces. This is a goal we

continue to strive towards by working with local, provincial and national partners to forge a better understanding of national laws and promote stronger relations with local police authorities.

*The Act is currently under review and the updated version of the Act is expected early in 2016.

Risk reduction:

We reduce risks to children by:

- **Working with children, their parents and their teachers to develop capabilities to identify and avoid abuse.** In strict hierarchical societies there are often powerful barriers preventing children from protecting themselves from abuse or asking for help. One Sky provides training to equip young children with the skills to identify when they feel uncomfortable or unsafe, while helping them practice the steps they can take to escape harm and ask for help.
- **Supporting low-income families.** In many cases we deal with, harms to children stem from family poverty or instability. One Sky provides family support for low-income and unstable families, including: food support, welfare support, healthcare support, family counseling and income generation opportunities.
- **Helping children to stay in education.** When in school, children are protected from abuse and exploitation found in the workplace, and develop skills that will protect them into the future. Through their teachers, they are also in daily contact with a group of trained professionals who can form a vital part of a child's safety network. Our Education Support and Income Generation projects are central to removing financial and other barriers to education, helping children to enrol and stay in school.