

# A model of holistic potential - development for the abused underprivileged children

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## Abstract

The research combines both qualitative and quantitative methodologies with the following objectives; (1) to study the problems of holistic potential-development of the abused underprivileged children (2) to study patterns of activities for holistic potential-development for abused underprivileged children (3) to propose patterns of activities for holistic potential-development for abused underprivileged children.

The selected groups of representative sample were: (1) the management team and community leaders who work with underprivileged children from both government and private sectors (14 people). (2) the workers with underprivileged children from both government and private sectors (6 people). (3) abused underprivileged children under care of government, private and public sectors (36 people). Tools used in this study were questionnaires, interviews, non-participant observation, conference discussions and informal discussions. Data was analyzed by qualitative content analysis and analysis of quantitative data with percentage and average results.

The results of this study were concluded as follows: (1) Problems for potential development of the abused underprivileged children; in government sectors: there are not enough workers, workers lack of the skills of working with underprivileged children. In private sectors: parents do not have time to care for their children; children imitate the bad behavior and are at risk, lack of cooperation in helping the abused underprivileged children. (2) The current patterns of activities for holistic potential-development for the abused underprivileged children in government agencies, private sectors and public sectors mostly do not meet the needs of the children and do not focus on the holistic potential-development of children in the following aspects; physical, academic learning, social, emotional, mental, moral, spiritual, and life skills to solve problems through the crisis. (3) The researcher has proposed the patterns of activities for development of following aspects; physical, academic learning, social, emotional, mental, moral, spiritual and life skills to solve problems through the crisis. The results show that the children understand and have an awareness of physical development at the highest level while they understand the development of learning, social, emotional, mental, moral, spiritual and life skills to solve

problems through the crisis at a high level. The researcher proposed a model for the holistic potential-development for abused underprivileged children in a “4 P's concept” which consists of Preparing / Providing / Protecting / Promoting.

**Keywords:** *holistic potential-development, abused underprivileged children.*

## Introduction

Behavioral problems of Thai children and adolescents are likely to be more severe and have expanded its circle. For instant, there are problems in the following issues; provocative outfits, premature sexual activity, multiple sexual partners, behavior of changing sexual partners, pregnancy during school, abortion and sexual intercourse without protection. It also includes selling of sexual video clips, sexual photography and sexual services (Department of Mental Health, 2006). There are abused children due to poverty and lack of opportunity. This leads those children to be under threat, suffering, neglecting, exploitation and even leads to death. As reported in the **State of the World's Children 2005** by UNICEF (2001), among 2,000 million children around the world, 3,000 children die every day, 13 million children lose their parents due to AIDS, one million children live in detention centers, 180 million children are forced with child labor in the worst condition every year, 1.2 million children are victims of human trafficking and about 2 million children are sexually abused or becoming prostitutes, being taken pornographic images and so on.

From the problems mentioned above, it reflects the severity of social problems that need to be solved very urgently especially for children from broken families such as divorced parents, parents died of disease, parents lost their jobs or from displacement. These children were classified as abused underprivileged children as the family's violence was continuing. Most of these children were orphans and were neglected. According to the reports by UNICEF(2001), the International Labor Organization and Phayao Shelter Child and Family (2008), it has been found that Phayao is the province with the largest number of abused children in the country. During the years 2007-2008, there were 485 abused children and 152 children were sexually abused. Among these children, there were those affected by AIDS and those who come from broken families. As a result, these children are at risk of danger such as assault, sexual threats, sexual exploitation and child labor. It is mainly because the families of these children do not have time to care for them. Some children have to live with another family. Thus, these children become abused underprivileged children and come under care of government and private sectors in order to receive social

welfare, protection, and education to which all children should be given. The operations of such agencies require a large budget as well as a large number of workers to be able to give full protection for these children and solve their problems before they can return to the community. The shelters, foundations and non-governmental organizations who work with underprivileged children play an important role to promote potential development of these children. The children are encouraged to discover their potential and achieve a great improvement so they can live safely and happily in society.

With all mentioned, the researcher is therefore interested in studying the problems and a model of holistic potential-development for abused underprivileged children under care of the government and private sectors which administration is protected by laws as well as having the activities to promote potential development for underprivileged children in five aspects: (1)physical, (2)academic learning, (3)social, emotional and mental, (4) moral and spiritual and (5) life skills to solve problems through the crisis. The research also aims to study how each of the organizations has continued to organize activities for potential development of the children, how the relationships between workers and children are and whether participation in those activities has helped develop a better mental health for those children. How have children home love warmth, hope and trust to other and how have got the physical. Mental rehabilitation, activity, safety and how make happily in their life.

The results from this study will lead to a better understanding of the problems of potential development for the abused underprivileged children. At the same time, it will propose a model for holistic potential-development that meets the needs of the abused underprivileged children. The proposed model for the holistic potential-development for the abused underprivileged children can be introduced to the agencies and organizations working with abused children to adapt and adjust a variety of activities. This will result in the effective potential-development of the children and the improvement of preventive care for the abused underprivileged children in the community and society.

## **Objectives**

1. To study the problems of holistic potential-development of the abused underprivileged children under care of government agencies, private sector and public sectors.
2. To study patterns of activities for holistic potential-development for abused underprivileged children under care of government agencies, private sector and

public sectors.

3. To propose patterns of activities for holistic potential-development for abused underprivileged children.

## **Methodology**

### ***Research Design***

In this study, the research combines qualitative and quantitative methodologies (Mixed-Methodology Design)

### ***Population and Samples***

Population was the abused underprivileged children in Phayao Province. Samples were purposively selected. They are:

(1 ) The management team and community leaders who work with underprivileged children from both government and private sectors –14 people.

(2) The workers with underprivileged children from both government and private sectors which include psychologists, social workers and children's care givers - 6 people.

(3) Abused underprivileged children under the care of the government, private and public sectors – 36 people. They were classified as physical abused - 9 children, psychologically abused - 3 children, neglected - 2 children, and sexually abused - 22 children.

### ***Study area***

4 Sub-districts in Dok Kham Tai District, Phayao Province were selected, as these areas have government, private and public sectors which work with abused underprivileged children and also have the largest number of abused underprivileged children in the country.

### ***Data collection***

The researcher collected data manually from November 2008 to December 2009. The period of 13 months was classified as follows;

**Phase 1** Study of the theory, principles and concepts of knowledge related to the concept of holistic potential-development for the abused underprivileged children.

**Phase 2** Study of the problems and context in the area of 4 sub-districts in Dok Kham Tai District which have the abused underprivileged children and study the context of government and private sectors, including the people who work with abused underprivileged children.

**Phase 3** Study patterns of the activities for the holistic potential-development for abused underprivileged children by government agencies, private sectors and people who work with abused underprivileged children.

**Phase 4** Organize activities for the holistic potential-development for the abused underprivileged children in the following aspects;

- (1) Physical (Health Quotient)
- (2) Academic learning (Education Quotient)
- (3) Social, emotional, mental (Social and Emotion Quotient)
- (4) Morality, Ethics (Moral and Spiritual Quotient) and
- (5) Life skills to solve problems and undergo crisis (Adversity Management and Life Skill Quotient)

**Phase 5** Evaluation of the results of activities for the holistic potential-development of the children who participated in the activities.

#### *Research Tools*

1. Tools for qualitative research are: (1) in-depth interviews with executives, workers and the abused underprivileged children (2) informal interviews with the executives workers and abused underprivileged children (3) Focus group discussion among abused underprivileged children to inquire about their needs, their behaviors and their understanding after the activities (4) non-participant observation while the abused underprivileged children taking part in the activities for development in their everyday life (5) informal inquiry and discussion about risky behaviors of children.

2. Tools for quantitative research include a survey for general information and a 5 – scale- evaluation sheet to assess the levels of awareness and understanding on activities for holistic potential-development.

#### *Data Verification*

Qualitative data were examined with Triangulation technique based on interviews, observation, inquiry and discussion.

#### *Data Analysis*

Data analysis is performed simultaneously with data collection. When data is collected, it is verified and then taken to an analysis.

1. Qualitative data; using content analysis techniques and tools of qualitative research as well as corporation with executives, community leaders, staff who work with the abused underprivileged children. The data was summarized, analyzed and verified whether the needed information was collected. In case the data collected do not fully cover the

objectives and content, the researcher returned to collect more information for further analysis.

2. Quantitative data; using descriptive statistics including percentages and averages.

## Results

### *1. General Information*

Among 20 executives and community leaders who work with the abused underprivileged children, 70 percent were female. 70 percent were between the ages of 36-45 years. 60 percent held a bachelor's degree. 45 percent had 6-10 years working experience in the field.

Among 36 abused underprivileged children, 69.45 percent were female. 58.35 percent were between the ages of 5-10 years. 12 children were under care of government agencies, 12 children were under care of private sectors and 12 were under care of public sectors. 61.10 percent were sexually abused. 66.65 percent were those whose parents separated. 44.45 percent of those children have become dull and depressed.

### **2. Information of the problems and the proposed model activities for holistic potential- development for the abused underprivileged children**

#### *The Quantitative data*

(1) Problems on holistic potential-development for the abused underprivileged children. Children with physical abuse are helped with physical and mental care. Children who are psychologically abused are assessed and helped with mental care as well as legal proceedings with the parents. The neglected children are rescued, supported and assisted with psychological care and activities for promote children's development. The children who are sexually abused are taken care of physically and mentally including penal care, preparing themselves before returning to the community. There are also activities for the development of children such as life skills training, vocational training, etc. The problems are classified by types of organization as follows:

1.1 Government departments. Each department works separately on their tasks. The mission of these organizations not particularly focuses on the underprivileged children. The departments only work together on planning for a training to create a team network from multidisciplinary and have collaboration when there are underprivileged children in the area. The problems experienced include lack of knowledge and new

development model, staff is inadequate and not certain about the knowledge of the law, the activities for development do not meet the needs of the children and do not focus on systematic development. There is also a problem due to limitations of time.

1.2 Private sectors. It has been found that each sector has separate functions. Within each sector, there are a variety of activities developed but children do not pay attention to those activities as most of them are academic learning activities and emphasis on ethics and morality. There has been allocation of scholarships for children, supporting poor children and providing houses for those in need from time to time according to the goals and responsibilities of each sector. However, the management team of these sectors has no power to assess the factual information to help the children. They can only provide information and advocacy. They give training to children in the community and teach them the precautions to be on their own. They also promote community awareness on social disasters that have happened to the children.

1.3 The public sectors. It has been found that in some communities, there are groups of volunteers who work together on disaster monitoring. The members of the volunteer groups are from multidisciplinary. They organized meetings to map out plans for the operations to help underprivileged children in the district. However, in some communities, the leaders or those who have power do not show any interests in helping the underprivileged children. There is no network group of volunteers to monitor social disaster and lack of cooperation with government agencies. The community lack of staff to work on children's development. The volunteers do not have the knowledge about the law. There is no goal in caring for children, no budget for children's welfare in the community. The families are not aware of the problems and they tend to live separately.

(2) The model activities of holistic potential-development by government agencies, private sectors and public sectors who work with the abused underprivileged children. Classified by types of organization and qualitative and quantitative data as follows:

2.1 Government departments organized activities for children's development such as field trips, sports and exercise, music, arts and crafts and tree planting activities. These activities do not have a clear goal and do not meet the needs of the children. They are mostly activities of daily life. The children are under care of these agencies for a short period of time and so there is a limited time to prepare the child before returning to the community.

2.2 Private sectors organized activities for children's development such as teaching the morality, off-site excursions, planting vegetable gardens, cultural exchange in the community, "create dreams" activity, summer camp and individual counseling. There are a variety of activities for children by private sectors. But the children rarely show interests in those activities, except the individual counseling which the children pay attention to.

2.3 The public sectors organized activities for children's development such as the campaign against drugs, running for health, sports to form relationships, behavioral training for children and forestry tourism. However, there is no staff who can work fully and most activities do not meet the needs of the children. Activities have a lack of continuity and also lack of funding to implement these activities.

(3) Proposed patterns of activities and a model of holistic potential-development for the abused underprivileged children.

3.1 Guidelines for organizing activities for holistic potential-development for the abused underprivileged children. The qualitative data

3.1.1 Activities for physical development. There are 3 activities namely "Powerful hands" "Long jump" and "Sea Boxing". The results showed that physical activities can improve children's understanding and awareness at the highest level. The children discovered their potential and brought it to practice. The children have physical health and were interested in body exercise. They learned to play in groups with others, showing self-confidence and responsibility as well as became more rational. They tend not to think too much about what happened in the past.

3.1.2 Activities for academic learning. This consists of three events namely "Building a house", "Duty-free goods" and "Yum Yai". The results showed that learning activities had developed children's understanding and awareness at high level. The children discovered their potential and were able to implement it. Children were eager to participate in the activities for development. They learned to trust their friends and adults, form relationships with new people and make new friends. They didn't think about revenge, but showing forgiveness instead. They learned to rely on others and were ready share with others. Stealing behavior was reduced. Children learned to obey and follow instructions. However, some of the children did not show any interest in the activities because they did not want to set up plans.

3.1.3 Activities for social, emotional and mental development. There

are three activities namely “Touch the right place”, “Painting the trees” and “Strong Cell”. These activities encouraged an understanding and awareness of the children at high level. The children discovered their potential and brought it to practice, encouraging them to be in a good mood, ready to live with others, enable them to describe the valuable meaning of life. The children developed study plans, plans for daily life and for their future. They could understand and were aware of the social problems surrounding them. They have good self-control and allow themselves to become a part of good of society.

3.1.4 Activities for moral and spiritual development. This consists of three activities namely “Trees that bear fruit”, “The candle light of hope” and “Value of dried leaves”. It was found that the activities for moral and spiritual development resulted in an understanding and awareness at high level. The children discovered their potential and brought it into practice. They learned to love, make the decision to do the right things, tell the truth and not lies, reduce aggression and learned to obey and follow instructions. They appreciated the sacrifice, being integrated, and were able to distinguish the right and the wrong.

3.1.5 Activities to develop life skills to solve problems through the crisis. There are three activities namely “Making house-develop the city”, “Solving food shortage crisis” and “Noo Tok Tang”. It was found that the activities resulted in an understanding and awareness of the children at high level. The children discovered their potential and brought it into practice. They learned to follow precautions and have more disciplines in life, become more responsible for their duties. They obeyed adults, learned how to protect themselves from danger and learned to solve the problems.

### *The Quantitative data*

Table 1: An average data showing the levels of understanding and awareness of organizing activities for holistic potential development for the underprivileged children

Activity	Average	Levels of understanding and awareness
Activities for physical development		
“Powerful hand”	4.45	Highest
.“Long jump”	4.65	Highest
“Muay Talay” (Sea Boxing)	4.50	Highest
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.56</b>	Highest
Activities for learning development		
“Building a house”	4.20	High
“Duty-free goods”	4.35	High
“Yum Yai”	4.55	Highest
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.36</b>	High
Activities for social and emotional development		
“Touching the right place”	4.25	High
“Painting the tree”	4.45	High
“Strong Cell”	4.65	Highest
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.45</b>	High
Activities for moral and spiritual development		
“Trees that bear fruit”	4.50	Highest
“The candle light of hope”	4.60	Highest
“Value of dried leaves”	4.48	High
<b>Total</b>		
Activities for development of life skills to solve problems through the crisis		
“Making houses-develop the city”	4.50	Highest
“Solving food shortage crisis”	4.55	Highest
“Noo Tok Tang”	4.30	High
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.45</b>	High

The table indicates that the physical activities resulted in the highest level of understanding and awareness of the children while the activities for learning, social, emotional, mental, moral and spiritual development and life skills to solve problems throughout the crisis resulted in high level of understanding and awareness of the children.

**Propose a model of holistic potential-development for  
the abused underprivileged children**

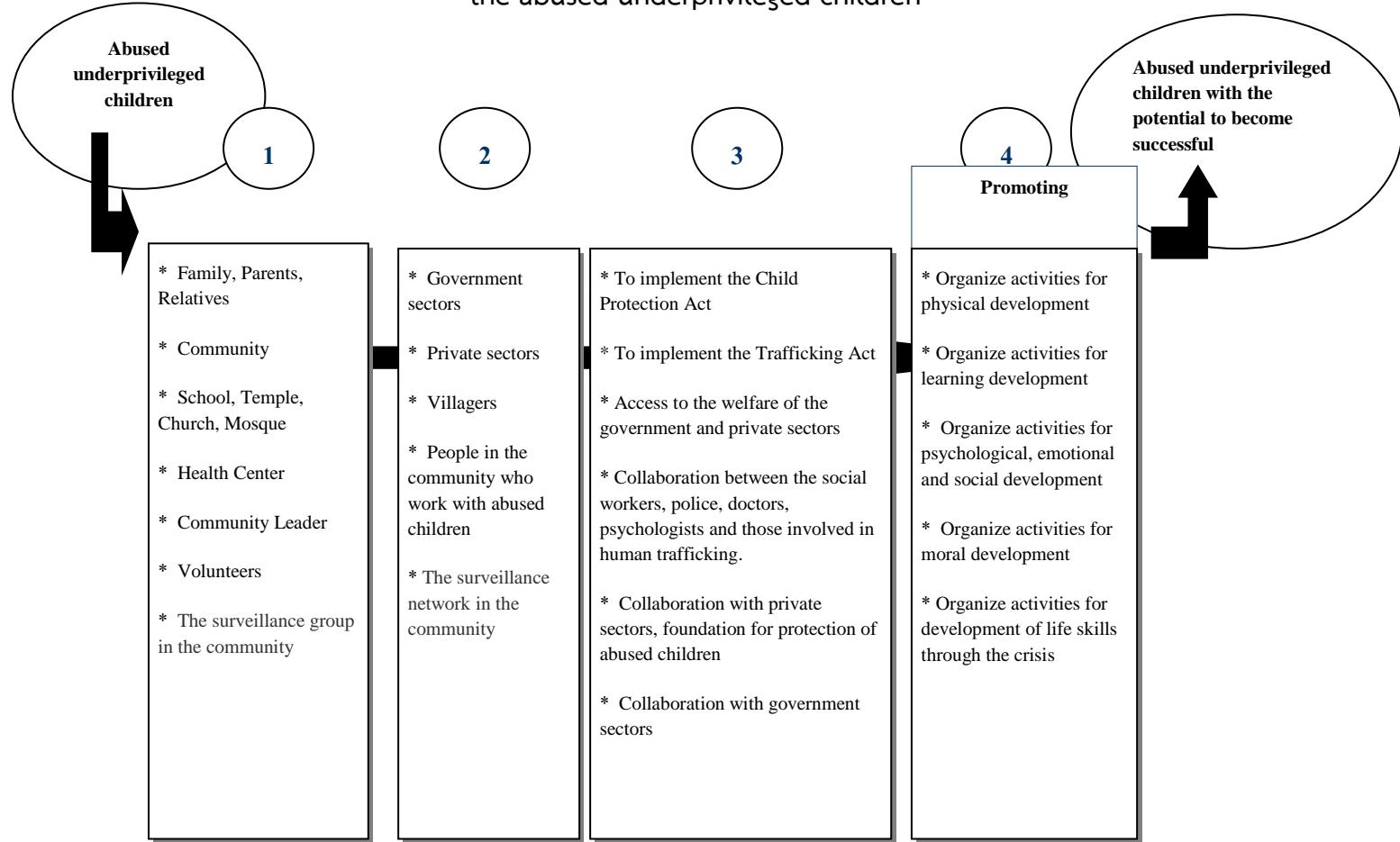


Figure I: a model of holistic potential-development for the abused underprivileged children

The researcher proposed a model of holistic potential-development for the abused underprivileged children with the 4 P's concept of (1) **Preparing**; to prepare all aspects. (2) **Providing**; to provide materials for children. (3) **Protecting**; to protect children and ensure the safety of children in the community. (4) **Promoting**; encourage children to involve in different activities of all aspects.

## Discussion

It is found that government agencies, private and public sectors have developed patterns of activities to promote the holistic potential-development for the abused underprivileged children. However, those patterns of activities do not focus on the systematic development in each aspect and do not meet the needs of abused underprivileged children. The potential-development of children through the effective development activities will lead to an understanding and awareness of the children. It will help them to discover and understand their own potential, skills and knowledge for the well-being and self-expression. The children will have the skills of problem solving, becoming successful in education and can live their social life happily. This is consistent with the idea of Kingfah Sindhuvong and Phisarn Suwanno(2010).

The researcher has proposed the new patterns of activities to promote holistic potential-development for the abused underprivileged children in the aspects of physical, academic learning, social, emotional, mental, moral, spiritual and life skills to solve problems through the crisis which is an integrated holistic development pattern and is consistent with the activities of the Siam Commercial Foundation (2010) as well as the activities in the prevention of cruelty to children in the United States (Prevent Child Abuse America, 2010). From in-depth interviews, it is found that the proposed patterns of activities have developed children's potential and met the needs of the children.

Unlike the old patterns of activities which some children disliked and did not help the children develop their potential fully. The staff previously had no knowledge and no time. When the patterns of activities have been adjusted and there is rewarding, it results in development of the children especially the physical development where the children have the highest level of understanding and awareness. The children learned to play with others and become good friends. The activities of academic aspect allow children to learn and live with others, have a strong mind and enable them to learn new things. The activities in the aspect of social, emotional and mental led the children to have emotional stability, reduce fear, and be ready to live and share with others. The activities in spiritual and moral aspect encouraged the children to be willing to help others, trust others, and see the good example which is consistent with the concept of the U-dom Petchsangharn (1998), which stated that the moral of knowing the right and the wrong comes from the example. Furthermore, if the children get to practice it by themselves, the good feelings will remain in their mind. This is consistent with the guidelines for prevention of violence and neglect of children by Narongdetch Anusaksathien (2006). The activities in the aspect of life skills to

solve problems through the crisis let the children know how to solve the problems they are facing and be able to protect themselves.

The researcher has proposed a model of holistic potential-development abused underprivileged children in a 4 P's concept. It consists of 1) **Preparing** ; preparation for physical and mental supporter that starts from family and relatives, and is consistent with the concept of Decha Siricharoen (2009) which states that good health begins at home. 2) **Providing** ; providing materials for the abused children to give them the opportunity for physical and mental development, enable them to develop new ideas for a better life, like the activities of the Office of Child Protection Thailand (2010) Siam Commercial Foundation (2010), activities to prevent cruelty to children in the United States (Prevent Child Abuse America, 2010) and McGehee (2001). 3) **Protecting** ; to protect the safety of children in the community using The laws related to child protection which is consistent with the concept of Gruyer, Nisse, & Sabourin (2004), stating that to protect the abused children is to educate those who responsible for the children so they can observe and to discover the problems early and pay attention to vulnerable groups. 4) **Promoting** ; encouraging the children to participate in a variety of activities in the aspects of academic learning, social, emotional, mental, moral, spiritual and life skills to solve problems through the crisis. This is consistent with the concept of Suthira Rewlueng (2000) that children should be encouraged to learn and have an understanding about the problems of sexual abuse and be able to deny sexual abuse.

These activities can be used as a model for holistic potential-development for the abused underprivileged children. With their participation in the development of all areas on a regular basis, the children will be able to improve themselves in a good way and not become a burden of society.

### **Recommendations for utilization**

1. Guidelines for activities to promote holistic potential-development for children. Encourage the government agencies, private sectors and public sectors to develop the activities for a systematic potential-development of children that meet the needs of children.

2. Guidelines to prevent the problems. Encourage the campaigns that promote actions against child abuse. Organize professional development fund for parents of the abused underprivileged children. Promote teaching at church, temple and school and continuously encourage children with the moral development.

3. Guidelines to solving of the problems. Encourage the activities to strengthen the relationship of the people in the community. This will help ensure the safety and harmony in the community. Establish a volunteer group to monitor social disasters that happen to children in the community. Encourage strong community and not allow an intervention or unfair exploitation of the community.

4. Guidelines for rehabilitation and treatment. Encourage children to have high self-esteem and strong mind. Provide consultation to children so they are ready to face different situations with confidence. Encourage the children to do the right things and pursue an honest living in the long run. Support children and families affected by child abuse. Encourage family members to live together. Encourage employment for families.

5. Guideline for development, promoting and supporting. Encourage the abused children to receive education, professional skills according to their interest and aptitude. Continuously organize activities for holistic potential-development. Provide opportunities for the abused underprivileged children to participate in those activities for potential development in order to prepare them before they return to the community.

6. Guidelines for development process with participation of the community. The abused children are part of the community. The community should have a development process to deal with the problems in all aspects. The community should have the knowledge, plans and the potential to access the problems including the activities for development that meet the needs of children and their families. There should be a network group of volunteers to look out and prevent disasters. There should be an operating centre to protect abused children. All sectors and all parties should cooperate and work on matters of child abuse in all forms. There must be a good coordination between all agencies especially when there is a problem.

### **Recommendations for further study**

1. There should be a study on the needs for social support of the abused underprivileged children.
2. There should be a study on the prevention of child abuse in a community.
3. There should be a study on an effective model to promote prevention, treatment and rehabilitation for abused underprivileged children.
4. There should be a study on the policy of the government sectors on the abused children.

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