



International  
Labour  
Organization

# Meeting the Challenge

Proven Practices for Human Trafficking Prevention  
in the Greater Mekong Sub-region



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in the Greater Mekong Sub-region

Mekong Sub-regional Project to Combat Trafficking  
in Children and Women

International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour  
International Labour Organization

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# Foreword and summary

Perhaps one of the most consistent and compelling storylines in global folklore is the tale of a young person's journey into the unknown - a life-altering event for someone in search of adventure, fortune and happiness. This life journey is central to many literary traditions and indeed cultures. In the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS), there are also many stories like this - stories about people who leave family and country behind in order to seek a better life elsewhere. Consequentially, it is also part of an increasing trend of greater mobility, regular and irregular migration for labour and contributes to further urbanization. While there may not be a pot of gold at the end of most migrants' rainbows, the new destinations may provide better work opportunities and the chance to build a better life, earn more money and demonstrate the success of one's initiative to family members back home with a regular financial remittance.

The reality, however, for many migrants in the GMS is less fortunate. Often they experience a destination full of new and unexpected obstacles, hardships, labour exploitation and sometimes outright misery. If the movement itself has involved force, threats, deception or coercion – or in any event if the migrant is a child – the combination of that movement and serious labour or sexual exploitation at destination is, by definition, human trafficking – a gross human rights abuse.

Unlike human smuggling or “illegal” migration, human trafficking is a crime *against the person*, not a crime *against the state* and, as such, it has emerged as a significant threat to the personal security of millions of people on the move across Asia and the GMS specifically. For society and policy-makers this has indeed become a “Mekong Challenge.”

Since 2000, the International Labour Organization's Mekong Sub-regional project to Combat Trafficking in Children and Women has responded to this challenge by working with its Government and Social partners, developing new and innovative ways to address trafficking within the context of labour migration and the exploitation of a young person's vulnerabilities. Recognizing that many young people want to move to find work, and indeed have a right to do so, this project – commonly referred to as TICW – has created



programming designed to help ensure this movement is safe, legal, and into labour sectors where people can work free of forced labour, exploitation and the worst forms of child labour.

Funded by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development, this work represents a fresh and important angle from which to examine and fight human trafficking – and TICW's efforts to do so have been comprehensive in scope. Working directly with policy makers and Governments in Cambodia, China (Yunnan Province), Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam this ILO project has provided technical assistance to help ensure migration channels are open and accessible and it has worked with communities and grassroots organizations to make sure that people are informed of this. TICW's initiatives reflect the multi-faceted and multi-disciplinary nature required in effective anti-trafficking campaigns. Additional funding from the UN's Human Security Fund, provided by the Government of Japan, allowed the TICW project team to develop direct assistance through local partners to source communities most vulnerable to the effects of human trafficking.

Considering trafficking in terms of this new labour migration paradigm means that prevention can not only be programmed before people move (at 'source') but also once they arrive at their destination. By focusing research





and prevention programmes on the labour sectors in which exploitation is known to occur – including tourism and the service sectors, fishing and seafood processing, low-skilled manufacturing, domestic work and other informal workplaces – this ILO project aims to eliminate the exploitation component at destination that turns labour migration into human trafficking.

In adopting this new paradigm for combating trafficking, TICW has been able to draw upon the strengths of the ILO and its many relevant contacts with workers' and employers' organizations, as well as with traditional partners in government and the non-government sector.

This broader understanding of trafficking as a function of labour migration brought clarity and depth to the concept of trafficking 'demand'. TICW's research efforts have provided strong evidence that 'demand' is a labour market phenomenon; linked to misguided employment and migration policies, unscrupulous labour practices, labour market inequalities and the supply of migrant workers so economically desperate they will bear inhuman treatment just to earn a living.

**..this ILO project aims to eliminate the exploitation component at destination that turns labour migration into human trafficking**

TICW's work has proved that the key to eliminating human trafficking lies in understanding – in all its detail and shifting nuance – what 'vulnerability' means, and in acting to protect against these vulnerabilities in the labour migration process. It is significant that vulnerability is not a fixed state; it varies over time, according to circumstances and can increase, even for example, when people become more educated or have more disposable income.

Key to progress is to first understand the motivations behind the decision to migrate for work – temporarily or permanently. Although poverty is often quoted as the root cause of trafficking and exploitation, it is in fact rarely the poorest people who attempt to move and find work. Rather it is the family that has just enough income or capital to finance travel, or the young person who is educated or intuitive enough to know that there are better economic opportunities further a field.

Labour migration is a tradition in many places in the GMS. Those living along borders may cross into a neighbouring country everyday to report to places and communities where they've worked for years. But unbridled and misguided movement is what puts people at greatest risk of being exploited or being victimised by traffickers who promise them better work in other industries or other places within a host country.

As part of the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour this project is committed to helping lift all children out of the worst forms of child labour by 2016 – and in the Greater Mekong Sub-Region, migrant children are among those who need help the most. The ILO is also dedicated to play its part in securing decent work for all people of working age – especially young women – the mothers and future mothers of the next generation. Again in helping create an environment for decent work, there should be no distinctions made regarding an individual's nationality, present place of residency, or documented status.

This publication outlines TICW's experiences in combating trafficking of children and women in the GMS and innovative programming. These, however, are just 'highlights' – samples of what has been achieved and what has been learned – and complement a much more detailed collection of proven practices available in both hardcopy and online.

After eight years of learning the needs, sharing the tools and working closely with our partners in Government, Workers' and Employers' Organizations, NGOs and grassroots communities, we now take this opportunity to share these with you – the reader.

From our perspective, "prevention works" – not just at source, but in transit and at destination. We sincerely hope you will find the following pages and our other information materials both interesting and useful in your own work now and in the future.

Bill Salter  
*Director, Subregional Office for East Asia*  
*International Labour Organization*

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*Special Insert: The Countries and Selected Proven Practices*



## 1. An overview:

### Trafficking in children and women in the Greater Mekong Sub-region

Since the early 1990s, a number of factors have conspired to increase incidents of human trafficking around the world; the international community has responded in kind, making the fight against human trafficking a high priority on the international political and humanitarian agenda.

In recent years, production, consumer demand and markets for goods and services have been globalized. Economic gaps have widened between countries and within them, leaving some to struggle for a living while others prosper. And of course the advancement of technology and the globalization of news media have brought all of this to the attention of increasing numbers of people.

Organized crime has been globalized as well, with governments becoming increasingly concerned about violence and threats that cross national borders.

More people have been on the move, too, as a result of internal conflict, natural and man-made disasters, uneven population growth, inconsistent access to quality education closer to home and better employment opportunities away from home.

All of these factors have contributed to the increase in both legal and irregular migration as vulnerable populations in almost all regions of the world have moved to find work or just in the hope of a better life elsewhere. In some cases, elsewhere is within the same country, and in others, it involves crossing a border. Sometimes the move is temporary – for example for seasonal work — but for others the moves are permanent or semi-permanent.

These same factors have also increased opportunities for those who exploit people's needs and dreams for profit at many different points in the migration chain: when people are planning to move, while they are en route and when they arrive at their destination. If at any stage of this movement (including the destination) there is force, threats, coercion or deception followed by exploitation at the destination, then it is in fact trafficking. When children are involved (below 18 years), moving or receiving them for the purposes of exploitation is trafficking regardless of whether any force, threats or coercion were involved.

In the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS), trafficking in children and women is a problem of significant proportions.<sup>1</sup> It has been on the agenda of governments, international agencies and non-government organizations (NGOs) for almost two decades but, for many years, trafficking in this region was considered narrowly as a problem of commercial sexual exploitation of women and, more recently, of children.

Most people still associate 'human trafficking' with images of women being herded into substandard transport to be carried off to brothels, or of children moved across borders to satisfy the predatory demands of paedophiles and sex tourists. To a large extent, the day's popular media (film and television included) perpetuate this incomplete understanding of trafficking.

These dramatic images do, indeed, represent a part of reality, but only a small part. In fact, their proliferations mask a much bigger picture of trafficking in the GMS that affects all sorts of people, across many economic sectors – namely trafficking for labour exploitation.

In addition to the commercial sex sector (in all its forms, including indirect exposure from



working in tourist areas, bars and other entertainment establishments), trafficked girls and women endure severe exploitation in diverse activities that include manufacturing, agriculture, domestic service and seafood processing.

**Human trafficking is not just an issue of sexual exploitation but a social development problem closely related to the economies and labour markets of the sub-region and the exploitation of vulnerable people confronted with these realities. It is in many cases linked to deeply rooted habits relating to work and the movement of people**

And it is not just girls and women at risk of labour abuses - boys and men are also routinely trafficked into exploitative labour situations in the sub-region - often pressed into slave-like conditions in mines, quarries, factories, fishing boats and other work requiring hard manual labour – as well as indentured servitude.

In fact, the understanding of trafficking in this region has long been clouded by the manifold ‘*common wisdoms*’ that have grown over the years based on perceptions and half-truths. Even as new research, little by little, casts light on the realities of trafficking, those common wisdoms tend to re-emerge and are reinforced through repetition.

The reality is that human trafficking is not just an issue of sexual exploitation but a social development problem closely related to the economies and labour markets of the sub-region and the exploitation of vulnerable people confronted with these realities. It is, in many cases, linked to deeply rooted habits relating to work and the movement of people. Any analysis of trafficking consequently has to include an understanding of the social and economic realities of the places from which people originate, where they end up and the environment in which they find themselves, and how they arrived there.





## 2. the ilo and human trafficking prevention in the gms



The ILO's Project to Combat Trafficking in Children and Women in the Greater Mekong Sub-region – known as TICW – was the first major initiative to recognize the complexity of trafficking in the GMS, its fundamental links to labour migration and exploitation, and the need to develop programming to take account of this.

After preparatory work to bring together what was then known about trafficking in the GMS, and consultations with governments and organizations across the region, TICW was launched in 2000, initially for three years – under the auspices of the ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour, IPEC.

From its beginnings, TICW developed, tested and evaluated new processes and programming to tackle trafficking at its roots. The project commissioned research to fill in some important gaps in knowledge, including issues surrounding labour

migration and work patterns in the GMS. These helped by providing reliable data on the number and categories of people moving to seek work or better life opportunities, as well as the mechanisms that facilitate and support this movement. Special efforts were made to study cases of illegal/irregular migration and undocumented labour, in the informal sector and in clandestine or illegal employment – and to draw workers' and employers' organizations into the movement.

In the early years (2000-2003) much of the work undertaken was planned as 'demonstration' activities, at first focusing on actions in source communities to better understand the rationale of migrants and the techniques used by recruiters and traffickers. At the same time, TICW worked to strengthen communities and make them resilient to trafficking through education and the advent of community

surveillance and reporting schemes. This experience at the grass roots level was also used to inform further programming involving government and community collaboration.

The connections between labour exploitation/migration and trafficking in the GMS became clearer as the project moved into its second phase (2003-2008). TICW commissioned new studies to cast light on the experience of migrants. Researchers sought comprehensive source-to-destination understanding of sub-regional migration through surveys and interviews, which examined the motivations, mechanisms, and outcomes that are wrapped up in labour migration. Whilst strengthening the operational links between central and local level mechanisms in providing and delivering services to people-at-risk in source communities, TICW expanded its project services to directly involve employers, workers and their organizations to stop exploitative and abusive employment in workplaces at destination. Advocating for better workplace protection for migrants, increased training for government officials and the tri-partite constituents on advocacy, migration management and recruitment regulation, providing safe migration messages, advocating safe migration messaging, the project aimed not only to enhance understanding of trafficking as an issue of *labour* migration and exploitation but also to develop responses to it within this framework, particularly with regard to the little studied ‘destination side’ of labour migration

Fast-forward to 2008 and the anti-trafficking policy landscape has changed dramatically. The GMS governments have undertaken a Joint Declaration on Human Trafficking with a commonly agreed Sub-Regional Plan of Action to tackle the problem. The Declaration clearly recognizes the forced labour aspects of human trafficking in the GMS, reaffirming their commitments to key principles of the ILO Conventions on Forced Labour and the Worst Forms of Child Labour. The subsequent Sub-Regional Plans of Action (2005-2006, 2007-2008) establish, at first, common directions in regulating abusive labour recruitment practices, and, further expand joint work to the “Prevention”, including the ILO TICW package – which targets vulnerability reduction, regulating recruitment practices, safe migration messaging and labour protection

The COMMIT members have also endorsed the Mekong Recommended Guidelines on Recruitment Policy and Practice, supporting expanded training programs for key government personnel. The Royal Governments of Thailand and Cambodia have legislated progressive anti-trafficking legislation, the governments of China, Viet Nam and Lao PDR have completed their National Plans of Action. These national plans clearly delineate key program areas on action against labour exploitation as a result of human trafficking and labour solutions. Special policy attention is being given to the situation of migrant children who are especially vulnerable to premature exploitative employment and likelihood of ending in the worst forms of child labour, with expanded technical cooperation programs in Thailand and China.

The GMS is also seeing the rise of a strong activist movement – from women and children who act to stop the exploitation of both themselves and others; to individual employers who challenge potential exploiters and strive to improve their own workplaces and working environments; to people and agencies mandated to protect the vulnerable.

Organizationally, policy makers, their enlisted authorities, trade unions, employers’ organizations, NGOs and other advocacy groups, are also coordinating activities to improve and expand services to more effectively reduce trafficking and reduce exploitation.

This important shift to prevent trafficking through initiatives at destination, as well as at source, also, leveraged ILO’s considerable and unrivalled expertise in the world of work. Drawing upon its relationships with workers’ and employers’ groups, the project was able to mobilize them in efforts to identify and address the exploitative workplaces and unscrupulous employment practices that characterize trafficking at destination.



### 3. the highlights



#### 3.1 Shifting the paradigm

The truth is that ‘trafficking’ – despite there being a now a well-established and broadly accepted definition of it in the Palermo Protocol — remains a generally cloudy concept. Trafficking activities are as diverse as they are secretive, and while the subject is conveniently standardized in conventions and treaties, such precision does not exist in reality or in the minds of the public, or even much of the anti-trafficking community.

Throughout Phase I (2000 – 2003), TICW sought to promote a better understanding of the nature of human trafficking in the GMS, because the research on the ground – especially relating to children – showed that the phenomenon was much more diverse and widespread than was generally believed. On the basis of studies, field observation and analysis, TICW moved to shift the trafficking paradigm to one that reflects the fact that trafficking is also

*“Labour exploitation  
into which people  
have (been) moved.”*

This redefinition of trafficking has led to broader exploration and understanding of the motivations and mechanisms involved with human trafficking. It also led to a clearer and more appropriate set of measures to combat trafficking which draw upon the ILO's knowledge of and connections to the labour sector.

Understanding trafficking in a labour context is critical, and the main contribution of TICW. Acknowledging that trafficking is connected with daily realities like labour markets, migration, and peoples' active search for work does not take away from the sinister, human rights violating aspect of trafficking. Instead the realization can help us to focus on the grim truths of the labour market and what some people must face to support themselves and their families.

**Broadening the discourse on human trafficking to include issues of labour migration and exploitation does more than change a definition. It alters the response, both in policy and community level programming...**

Broadening the discourse on human trafficking to include issues of labour migration and exploitation does more than change a definition. It alters the response, both in policy and community level programming, to combat trafficking. For example, the research prompted TICW to focus on promoting regular migration and ways to create such channels. It led TICW to initiate 'destination'-side prevention efforts and to more fully examine labour sectors where exploitation and trafficking may take place. Finally it led to much-needed programming to educate workers on labour rights and ensure their safe and informed migration and recruitment.

Because of the new understanding of links between trafficking and labour migration, there have been thoughtful shifts in policy related to anti-trafficking, migration, and employment. TICW's research has illuminated vulnerabilities that arise from current policy and suggested ways to strengthen migration and employment law for migrating workers and likely trafficking victims. In the past, migrant workers have often been excluded from comprehensive labour protection. TICW's research has revealed just how deeply that can expose migrants to labour exploitation. Policy that more

broadly addresses the issues of irregular migration, exploitive labour, and trafficking is sorely needed for their protection.

In light of the new labour migration paradigm, anti-trafficking initiatives and strategies now involve more stakeholders, namely the government officials, employers, and union representatives that make up the labour sector. National Decent Work Action Plans take on new relevance, and should be naturally integrated into anti-trafficking efforts.

This means major change to the way national anti-trafficking efforts have been mounted in the past. Typically, trafficking cases have been the domain of social welfare or family and youth ministries. Understanding trafficking in terms of a labour migration paradigm calls for a grander taskforce that brings labour, finance, trade and employment officials to the 'anti-trafficking table.'

### Examples

Though evidence of this paradigm shift is difficult to illustrate through examples, the impact and significance of it is reflected in the way other agencies and governments, most notably the Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking (COMMIT) and the UN Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking in the GMS (UNIAP), have embraced it. The new ideology is also of course reflected in the work of TICW itself, which has developed its programming accordingly to focus on promoting safe labour migration and demand-side projects that will prevent exploitation.

Among the efforts is TICW's *Mekong Challenge* series. These publications are unique in their examination of trafficking through their focus on labour sectors where exploitation is rife. Not only do they add to what is known about trafficking, the series promotes advocacy, policy and programming to prevent exploitive labour practices that will improve the lives of trafficking victims and vulnerable workers alike.

In some cases, the Mekong Challenge research dispelled long-held presumptions and led to better assessment of community needs and non trafficking-related problems. A 2006 study on young women working as 'beer promotion girls'





in Cambodia,<sup>ii</sup> for example, found that, contrary to popular belief, the women enjoy fair working conditions and are well-treated by their employers. Moreover, many of them are able to save or send money home. They had been legally recruited and employed, and there was scant evidence of trafficking in the sector. Instead, the women and their employers worry about clients who drink too much and become abusive, and many of the women express desire for like skills training and better work. Such results clarify our vision about beer promotion work and point to better-targeted advocacy and programming work that could help women in sector.

[The Mekong Challenge series] represents an important addition to the knowledge base but also promotes advocacy, policy and programming emphasis that can lead both to a reduction in the exploitation of workers who have not been trafficked and also to a reduction in trafficking, since it aims to contribute to eliminating the exploitative outcomes of the trafficking chain.

The Mekong Challenge series to date covers: the realities of young migrant workers in Thailand (*Underpaid, overworked and overlooked*); the plight of migrant child workers in Mae Sot, Thailand (*Working day and night*); and the recruitment, working conditions and vulnerabilities of Cambodia's 'beer promotion girls' and Cambodia's hotel and guesthouse workers. Additionally, the series has titles looking at the legal protection of migrant workers in Thailand (*Employment and protection of migrant workers in Thailand: National laws/practices versus international labour standards?*); a cross-border labour migration survey in Banteay Meanchey Province, Cambodia (*Destination Thailand*); the 'pull' side of human trafficking (*Redefining demand*); an analysis of a baseline survey in Yunnan Province; and a publication called *Winding Roads*, which reveals the findings from a 2003 migration survey of 6,000 households in Lao PDR. The series was rounded out in 2008 with a final publication on recruitment practices across the GMS that compelled

sub-regional and national reviews of existing recruitment policies and practices in the GMS.

All of these publications are widely circulated and quoted. In particular, the spotlight on workplaces in Thailand, especially the shrimp processing and fishing industry in Samut Sakhon, received a large amount of attention both at home and abroad. This research conducted by Mahidol University and the TICW project<sup>iii</sup> propelled a series of investigations, raid and recovery operations to remove young people from dangerously difficult employment, and evoked a commitment from Thai employers to open their factories for closer scrutiny of the labour conditions within.<sup>iv</sup>

### 3.2 Focusing on prevention at the point of origin

Developing anti-trafficking efforts in the context of labour migration and exploitation provides a useful framework for interventions, because the problem has a very clear beginning, middle and end. There is the source country or community with conditions that motivate women and children to leave; their journey involving cross-border routes and methods of migration; and their arrival at a destination, where they find work, and are oftentimes exploited. Of course trafficked people may find themselves being re-trafficked, and to this extent the trafficking story is less a line, then it is a 'loop'. Even so, each trafficking incident has a clear beginning and end, and TICW is one of the first projects to reflect this reality by creating both 'source' and 'destination'-side programming.

As the project progressed, TICW learned through field experience and ongoing monitoring and evaluation that source-side programmes will only have an impact on trafficking to the extent that they are aimed at those who are most at risk, vulnerable either to self-motivated migration or to being recruited by others.

It is important to recognize that vulnerability to trafficking and exploitation relates to both these forces—of personal desire and of external

coercion. Personal desire to migrate, becomes a risk factor when, for example, legal migration channels are closed, inaccessible, or unknown to the person seeking to move. In such cases, would-be migrants are more likely to seek out the irregular channels, which are often brokered by recruiters, illegal transporters, unscrupulous employers or other intermediaries.

**Vulnerability to trafficking and exploitation relates to both these forces—of personal desire and of external coercion. Personal desire to migrate, becomes a risk factor when, for example, legal migration channels are closed, inaccessible, or unknown to the person seeking to move.**

TICW aims to end trafficking, not migration. The right to move for the sake of livelihood is a fundamental one, which TICW strives to protect through programming that makes migration safer. Efforts include ensuring protections exist for migrant workers at ‘destination’, to shield them from exploitation and trafficking.

But efforts are also required at ‘source’, and a fine line exists between preventing trafficking and putting up obstacles to migration. In developing the policy and programming at a ‘source’ of migration, it is particularly important to keep TICW’s goals in mind and to help governments and communities understand them through careful and clear communication.

It is equally important to understand vulnerability at ‘source’. Vulnerability is not a simple question of poverty, sex, age or education. Vulnerability is the result of a complex and varied set of factors—some of which are quasi-established (sex, family economic status, family size, age) and some of which are almost coincidental and unpredictable (trigger factors such as family illness or death, conflict, natural and man-made disasters, economic crisis). Importantly there are also factors that come into play only in certain circumstances and may or may not result in vulnerability. Education, for example, is a protective factor for some children but a

vulnerability factor for others who may be prompted to migrate because they have learned more about options and feel empowered to seek them out; and improved financial status, including that which results from micro-finance/village bank-type interventions, can similarly prompt people to think about using their greater resources to migrate. In many ways, there is a ‘continuum of vulnerability’; vulnerability is not a static state.

Through its work, TICW has also shed light on trafficking and work recruitment practices, and the fact that they are diverse and cannot be overly simplified. Ongoing research on formal and informal recruitment in the sub-region suggests that informal recruitment is sometimes a better, more effective method. While that may be true, to ensure its safety, there is a critical need to understand in detail how informal recruitment works and how to keep it functioning and ‘clean.’

People move – and they should be free to do so. The key is making sure they can do so—safely, and into work that is not exploitative.

## Examples

### 3.2.1 Vulnerability database in Chiang Mai, Thailand

If vulnerability changes over time and with circumstance, then it is vital to account for this in profiling vulnerable groups or individuals in a community, so that early warning signals are recognized, and surveillance and protection can respond to changing needs.

To address this, TICW, through its Government partner, supported the development of a vulnerability database that allows for varied and changing data to be collated. This ‘vulnerability mapping’ can be used to target those most at risk, and to detect when individuals are put at an increased risk because of a change in circumstances. The database allows for regular updating, which will help to hone the process of identifying and targeting vulnerable members of a community.





**If vulnerability changes over time and with shifting circumstances, then it is vital to be able to take this into account in records of vulnerable groups or individuals in a community, so that early warning signals are recognized, and surveillance and protection can respond to changing needs.**

A product from TICW's work in Thailand, the database provides a critical and long sought-after tool for the international community. For more than a decade, international agreements have called for vulnerability mapping, documentation and information sharing, but governments have struggled to do so because of the complexity of the task.

Unlike past efforts which attempted (but failed) to capture data at a national level, the TICW-supported database in Thailand, grew out of fieldwork of a relatively modest geographical scope. Though the database is small in scale, it provides a model to be replicated and built across the country. Indeed by mid-2008 there were clear indications of replication, with a variety of Thai Government ministries expressing interest.

While elements of the database, related to the accessing and collection of information need to be refined, the mapping initiative is of great importance and potential. Drawing on some of the latest technology including satellite imagery, it has attracted the interest of various governments.

## The Chiang Mai Database

In cooperation with the Chiang Mai Coordination Centre for the Protection of Children's and Women's Rights, TICW commissioned a team from nearby Chiang Mai University to design a computer programme to create a human trafficking database. The database was designed to document and standardize trafficking data from many different sources and to be used by partner agencies and organizations throughout the province and eventually, the country.

The database consists of four sub-databases:

- The **risk index**, tracks 28 indicators of vulnerability, which are scored from 1 to 3 (highest risk). The result is a profile of communities and individuals who are potentially vulnerable to trafficking. The indicators include factors such as health, education, basic minimum needs and social welfare details. Reports on the situation of at-risk individuals are then displayed under various classifications: age, sex, hometown, etc., across a province. For those planning interventions, these can be used to prioritize areas for programming.
- The **'sin space'** contains primary and secondary information on workplaces in sectors known to be linked to exploitation. The information is used to produce high-resolution satellite image maps that display 'risky' places. It can be used for surveillance and interception.
- The **network** includes data on the multidisciplinary team members who respond to suspected cases of human trafficking including community or watchdog volunteers. It provides their contact details and information on their area of expertise.
- The **lessons learned** include the results of discussions between the multidisciplinary team members and victims of human trafficking. These cases offer considerable insight into the trafficking process. The programme analyses this information, intercept and help victims and to move cases more efficiently through the legal system.

### 3.2.2

#### Promoting the use of surveys and census data to focus on those at risk and support policy

One way of identifying family and individual vulnerabilities is through careful analysis of general labour or household surveys. In 2003, TICW supported a labour migration survey in Khammuane, Savannkhet and Champassak provinces of Lao PDR. The study collected and analysed general and migration-specific data which included information on household characteristics, perceptions and aspirations of children aged 10 – 17

and young people aged 18-25, and the experiences of returned workers.

The survey, which drew upon the expertise and previous anti-trafficking work of the ILO, was the first large-scale effort to investigate and test ideas about the causes, nature, rates and outcomes of migration in Lao PDR. The ILO's Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour (SIMPOC) has developed a variety of statistically relevant surveys including the household surveys used in the Lao survey effort. Surveys and data collection – although perhaps not 'sexy' in programming terms – are vital components of anti-trafficking efforts and not carried out nearly enough.





**Surveys and data collection – although perhaps not ‘sexy’ in programming terms – are vital components of anti-trafficking efforts and not done nearly enough**

The difference between informing people of the risks involved in moving and seeking work in areas where traffickers and exploiters operate, and actively deterring people from exercising their right to move and seek work is a subtle but significant one. *TICW learned that this was especially true of work in Yunnan Province, China, where local policies sometimes impeded people’s right to seek to move for the sake of work.*

Because of these issues, Yunnan’s environment required careful consultative planning, ongoing monitoring, capacity building and the possibility of immediate intervention if problems were to arise. The experience involved ensuring that everyone active in developing and implementing programming was very clear about the importance of advocating for and working towards improved access to legal migration channels. ILO’s advocacy work with the central government was therefore vital, but advocacy could not be effective without reliable data to support its various positions. For this, TICW was able to rely on a baseline survey it had commissioned in Yunnan Province.

The lesson to be learned from the Yunnan experience is that dispassionate, statistical data is an important tool in programme planning and advocacy and that statistical surveys, if properly constructed and analysed, are extremely valuable in this regard.

### 3.2.3

## Education, training and employment alternatives

### Keeping girls in school longer helps reduce their vulnerability to trafficking

In China’s Yunnan Province, rural inhabitants are easily inclined to migrate in hopes of earning larger incomes and improving their meagre standards of

living. The motivating migration factors are even greater for ethnic minority girls in remote, impoverished areas who have limited access to education and are attracted to a city life that, compared to working in the green terraced fields, appears easier and more glamorous.

For years many girls in Yunnan have been easy targets for traffickers because they weren’t aware of the risks associated with migration and lacked support structures when migrating voluntarily. Rather than ending up in the cities, many were unwittingly trafficked into even more remote rural areas and into forced marriages.

Working with the Education Bureau and using skills and systems built up in the first phase, the ILO-TICW project staff confronted the identified educational deficiencies of access, quality, relevance, cultural sensitivity and skills training that surfaced from the monitoring and evaluation processes.

The Spring Bud pilot programme was developed with three “pillars”: 1) scholarships for ethnic minority girls in four counties (Jiangcheng, Menghai, Menglian and Yuanyang); 2) improving the quality of education; and 3) building community momentum for involvement in protecting girls and also for replicating the programme elsewhere in China.

The four counties are located in remote border areas where poverty and the existence of many marginalized ethnic minority groups are particularly vulnerable to traffickers. In line with the Government’s move to promote nine years of compulsory education, the projects’ efforts have concentrated on dealing with problems of poor families, poor quality of teaching and the difficulty of enrolling girls into school and preventing them from dropping out.

The ILO-TICW project staff worked with the Yunnan Provincial Women’s Federation to establish a project plan, a steering committee and a project management office. The Women’s Federation pinpointed the Education Bureau as the primary partner for delivering trainings on trafficking, vocational and life skills and public health. Consultants trained a core group of teachers who in turn trained other teachers and then students. The Women’s Federation took charge of adult vocational training and business development.

Project staff then trained representatives from 14 relevant bureaus, such as judicial, law, police and agriculture, on migration, trafficking, equity and life skills. Once trained, bureau officers visited schools to discuss their own roles in society; the visiting police officer taught girls how to use the emergency phone number if ever they were in danger.

The Spring Bud programme continued the use of cascade training, in which recipients of training were responsible to in-turn train others in the same topic. Also an ILO toolkit called SCREAM (Supporting Children's Rights Through Education, the Arts and the Media) – was introduced to teachers to help improve education quality.

New teaching modules were developed on:

- **Trafficking risks:** Both what a trafficker may say in the village to coerce a family, and how a girl could be trafficked on her way to the city or while she is already there.
- **General life skills:** Including public health knowledge, HIV prevention and negotiation skills.
- **Vocational training:** Including hospitality training.
- **Gender equity:** Modules on equity between the sexes that runs across all other topics.

The girls were encouraged to take their SCREAM lessons as well as the skits, dances and songs to their own communities. To encourage teacher ownership of the SCREAM methodology, students provided feedback and advice and the teachers were allowed to revise the curriculum. A partnership workshop was organized in the second year of the programme for administrators, officials and teachers to refine the participatory monitoring and evaluation tools, which were then tested in target schools and communities.

The Women's Federation, on their own-funded initiative, developed brochures on trafficking prevention and safe migration that they distributed; the Education Bureaus developed vocational skills handbooks for girls and community members and conducted trainings on cultivation skills, animal husbandry, handicraft design, small-business development and hospitality skills.

Anecdotal evidence and small independent studies have indicated that the trafficking of girls has decreased and girls' ability to protect themselves has increased.

The education assistance helped increase confidence, assertiveness and self-reliance among the girls and helped them focus on their own education. Explained one teacher: "Change is clearly visible in the girls. They are no longer willing to do small menial jobs; they have more skills, and when they go looking for a job, they are looking for jobs that can make use of their skills."

Teaching quality has also improved to better meet the practical needs of girls and teacher training has been undertaken to encourage more participatory approaches to learning.

### Vocational Training – Learning marketable skills also reduces vulnerability

Aside from China's Yunnan Province, other countries of origin in the GMS also participated in vocational skills trainings for vulnerable girls and young women. In Cambodia, Northern Thailand and Viet Nam, young women enrolled in TICW-supported training courses to help them develop skills they could use if they later chose to migrate to cities or industrial areas. Often the various training programmes (e.g. textiles, tailoring, cooking, etc) were implemented by Government departments, women's unions or workers' organizations. In Northern Thailand, an area where many ethnic minority girls are at heightened risk of trafficking, a local school became involved in Chiang Rai where approximately 10% of its students were from ethnic minority families.

### Micro-finance in Lao PDR through Village Development Funds reduces migration-related vulnerability to trafficking

While micro-finance initiatives can help to alleviate poverty or act as a stop-gap, they can also be used to reduce a young person's vulnerability to trafficking resulting from



# Meeting the Challenge 3



ill-prepared migration. Microfinance responds directly to triggers of risky migration and vulnerability to traffickers by buffering families from financial shocks and helping to increase their incomes by enabling people to start, expand or purchase supplies for local businesses.

Displacing village loan sharks and their high-interest loans and instilling a culture of savings and planning, the “VDF” or village banking programme in Lao PDR brings new innovation through a savings-based approach to an established system of rural finance. The complementing provision of vocational and business management training offers a balanced solution to risky migration.

Unlike other micro-finance plans – in order to borrow one must also save money too. Although studies have shown that even the poorest people in Lao communities have a capacity and desire to save, there have been few interest-earning and safe options available to them. A 2003 study showed that only 11 per cent of the rural population had access to formal financial institutions, and only 1 per cent had bank deposits.<sup>v</sup> In addition, productivity in the agriculture sector, which is the livelihood source of 83 per cent of the population, is low due to low levels of investment. Studies have found that women own and operate most of the

registered small businesses in the country,<sup>vi</sup> but limited access to market information, technical training and financial services hamper their entrepreneurial activities.

The Lao Sustainable Community Development Promotion Association (LA), a national non-profit organization, worked with the ILO project to help the target communities adapt to this new approach. Primarily, members of the village banks now have to maintain a certain amount of savings for at least three months prior to receiving the right to borrow from the village bank; thus the villagers have an invested contribution to the bank’s success. Also, the committee managing the village bank must consist of both men and women. The poorest villagers and women and men are to have equal access to the savings and credit schemes. There also has been increased training of the village committee members managing the village bank.

The results have been impressive. Village Fund savings average more than 1,000 USD and loan repayments are nearly 100%. Well over 100 villages are now participating and the Government and its institutions have pledged to continue the programme and indeed expand it.

## Village Banking - VDFs

In implementing the project, the Lao Sustainable Community Development Promotion Association (LA) first visited villages together with the local government partners to explain the village banking concept, its advantages and challenges. If at least 15 villagers were interested, the LA provided training on village banking.

After the training in each village, the group elected a village bank management committee, including a president, a treasurer and other members. The management committee oversees the day-to-day affairs of the village bank and approves loans. A village bank advisory committee was also established to oversee the village bank management committee and consists of the village head, a representative of the Lao Women's Union and other respected community members. The advisory committee and the management committee, along with the village bank members, agreed on the rules, management principles, interest rates for loans (3–4 per cent per month), the loan period (three to nine months), loan size (no more than five times of savings account or shares), repayment deadlines, penalties for late or non-payment and target groups (poor families).

The LA and ILO-TICW staff provided training and on-the-job support for members of the management and advisory committees on all aspects of village banking and loan and savings administration. Relevant district government staff and youth volunteers who would help in the monitoring of the village banks were included in the training. Government staff assigned to the ILO-TICW project received additional technical training for supervising the overall expenditures, monitoring, advising, auditing and reporting on the progress of the village banking programme. The LA and ILO-TICW staff also monitored the village banks to ensure that democratic principles were adhered to in the disbursement of loans.

In addition to the microfinance support, the ILO-TICW project provided skills training and business training, organized in collaboration with relevant government departments. The Provincial Departments of Agriculture and Forestry, for example, offered skill instruction on chicken and pig-raising. The business training included an ILO programme called “Get Ahead for Women in Enterprise” that is designed for poor women who want to start or expand a micro business.

### 3.2.4 District Operating Centres

The ‘community watchdog’ concept has been a mainstay of TICW’s source—side trafficking prevention efforts. Such programmes rely on practical action (community alerts allowing intervention in cases of immediate risk) and are valuable tools in terms of longer-term capacity building, empowerment and sustainability. In Phayao province, TICW contributed to the development and support of District Operating

Centres, by identifying and training 306 ‘watchdog’ volunteers in 124 villages, and training 188 community leaders (128 women and 60 men) in 68 sub-districts in trafficking issues. An effective multi-disciplinary team in Phayao was developed and strengthened.

Testament to their success and relevance, Phayao’s operating centres are now supported by government funds and are frequently visited by provincial authorities and government officials who look to make the centres a model for others to be established around the country.





### 3.3

## Promoting safe migration

Promotion of safe migration is key to ensuring that migrants choose legal and protected migration channels, reducing the likelihood that they are deceived by recruiters or trafficking brokers in the process. The ILO commissioned a multi-country research project in Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam on the difference between formal and informal recruitment from the perspectives of governments, employers and migrant workers. TICW research revealed that most migrants perceived formal recruitment as too slow, expensive and complicated and are not assured that migrants using the legal channels in the GMS have better protection of their rights, salaries and working hours than workers who migrate informally. The unregulated system of salary deductions and the absence of standard contracts are weaknesses in the legal system, exposing many migrant workers to possible abuses. Pre-departure orientation courses, often legal requirements in the GMS countries, are not uniformly provided.

#### 3.3.1

### Improving Recruitment Policies and Practices

In late 2007, the ILO coordinated national and sub-regional consultation meetings to discuss the findings from the research, the challenges with the current migrant recruitment systems and proposals for improvement. At the project's 5<sup>th</sup> Sub-Regional Advisory Committee (SURAC), representatives from Government, employers' organisations and workers' organisations drew on the findings from the research to develop *Recommended Guidelines for Migrant Recruitment Policy and Practice in the Greater Mekong Sub-Region*. The sub-regional synthesis report on brokers/agents and the opportunities and threats they represent to migrant workers was published in mid-2008.

Using a training resource guide in recruitment developed by the project, a series of recruitment training sessions was also held in all the GMS

countries, resulting in very specific detailed recommendations on ways to reduce costs, cut delays, and improve legal recruitment channels in the GMS. More importantly, governments as well as workers' and employers' organizations taking part in these training sessions, received training on the links between labour migration and trafficking. Subsequent reports indicated that these sessions led to greater collaboration and information sharing between the various parties, particularly in the development of new anti-trafficking approaches and interventions.

#### 3.3.2

### Travel Smart – Work Smart

*Travel Smart – Work Smart* is a 'guidebook' designed to give potential labour migrants as well as those who have already migrated, the information and resources they need to migrate safely and work without exploitation, thus reducing their vulnerability to human trafficking (see box). Targeted primarily at young women and teens of working age, the guide was piloted in Thailand, the principal destination for migrant workers in the GMS. A similar guide was also published in Viet Nam for Vietnamese workers migrating within their country and beyond. Meanwhile, Lao PDR and Cambodia have produced similar guides for migrant source communities, and in China, a guide developed by TICW's sister project, CP-TING (ILO Beijing), is being distributed in five provinces and a separate edition has been adapted for Yunnan Province. The primary target audience was young women migrating for work within China.

While the guides educate likely migrants on the migration process, they also importantly recognize and address the migrant's desire or need to move. The guides can also be easily adopted and adapted by local and national governments, and are likely to become a staple element of migrant labour policy in both receiving and sending countries for the foreseeable future.

## A travel guide with a difference: Travel Smart – Work Smart

Arming young migrant workers and other vulnerable groups with ‘smart’ information on how to protect themselves from trafficking-related abuses lies at the forefront of any trafficking prevention strategy. It is both informative and empowering – and if drafted in a consultative manner is inclusive and will have greater relevance to the migrant or potential migrant.

Stakeholders were also an absolute requirement and so TICW worked with governments, workers’ and employers’ organizations and NGOs in the GMS to publish safe-migration materials for migrant workers under the title ‘Travel Smart – Work Smart’.

The audience for the information is not homogenous. Migrants have varied reasons for leaving home – and those reasons can vary from person to person and country to country. Therefore the guides were tailor-made depending on the country and the target audience.

In Thailand, the guides target young foreign migrants—particularly teen girls and young women, the group most at risk of exploitation—that work in Thailand or are in transit to do so from three neighbouring countries.

*Travel Smart – Work Smart: A ‘smart’ guide for migrant workers in Thailand*, was published in three languages: Burmese, Khmer and Laotian. 11 international and national NGOs and networks distributed the guides in various migrant ‘hot spots’ within Thailand. A version was subsequently published in Po Karen language.

The first edition in Thailand was published following consultation with the Royal Thai Government and was divided into three parts, illustrated with cartoons of a young migrant worker en route to her destination. The guide explains the dangers and pitfalls of unprepared migration, with an emphasis on transit and destination. It also reinforces the Royal Thai Government’s policy to encourage migrants to register to work in Thailand before they leave home by applying for registration through their own governments – a process that allows them to become part of the official Thai quotas for migrant workers in various sectors. A second more user-friendly edition was published in 2008, with a greater emphasis on just staying safe and avoiding potentially abusive employers/environments.

The Thailand destination guide stresses ways for migrants — whether registered or unregistered, documented or otherwise — to stay safe while in Thailand, how to avoid abuse by unreliable employers, and where to turn if they need help. It informs them of minimum wage and working conditions they are entitled to under Thai law. They are informed about the Job-seekers Protection Division of the Department of Employment where they can make a complaint and the hotline number (1506) is prominently displayed in case migrants need counselling or redress as are the numbers of NGOs who can provide support in the migrant’s own language. Of course, the anti-trafficking hotline (1300) is also included.



### 3.3.3

## Harnessing the power of the media to promote strong information messages

In Lao PDR, in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture and Information and UNIAP, TICW supported the development of a radio programme that targets adolescents with anti-trafficking messages. The radio programme, which broadcast its message several times per day, was extremely popular among young people. When teens were asked about the programmes, they particularly remembered warnings about the dangers of undocumented migration.

The radio campaign is different from many other anti-trafficking information initiatives in that it provides practical information about safe migration, in addition to warnings about trafficking. Such an approach is especially important for addressing questions and reaching adolescents who, despite the risks, are among the most likely to migrate for work.

TICW also found innovative means to communicate anti-trafficking messages in Cambodia. Working with the BBC World Service Trust, TICW developed a trafficking storyline for *Taste of Life*, a popular telenovella (soap opera), and for a full-length feature film titled *In the Dark*. In Cambodia, where 52 per cent of the rural population own a television set and 85 per cent of the population have access to media, using television drama is an extremely effective way to disseminate messages. The telenovella was part of an integrated multi-platform media project, which also included TV and radio spots (both of which covered trafficking), as well as 200 radio phone-in programmes on Cambodia's most popular radio station, FM 103.

**In Cambodia, where 52 per cent of the rural population own a television set and 85 per cent of the population have access to media, using television drama is an extremely effective way to disseminate messages.**

To supplement the telenovella, the BBC also created a comic book and designed interactive messages that rolled across the television screen during *Taste of Life* episodes. The messages asked questions of the show's audience, such as "Should he leave his girlfriend?" to which audience members respond via text message. The BBC did thorough testing of each episode to ensure that their story lines were likeable, well targeted and relevant. Episodes were even tested before an audience of women in prostitution to assess whether or not the stories and characters were realistic.

The trafficking storyline was written particularly for young people between the ages of 14 and 18, who live with their parents in rural areas, though the audience reach was massive – in all age groups – with an estimated four-million viewers in total.

The news media, and public discourse toward migration and trafficking for labour exploitation, were carefully examined throughout the second phase of the project. Using existing mass-communication research methods, a systematic content analysis of the sub-region's two main news journals of record (*The Bangkok Post* and *The Nation*) was conducted from 2004 – 2008. More than one thousand news articles were examined and clearly indicated a trend of increasing press interest in migration and trafficking-related news. The content analysis also discovered evidence that migrants were often reported about as a group of people who needed to be controlled. This was further confirmed by a poll jointly commissioned in Thailand in 2006 by the TICW project, another ILO migration project and UNIFEM.

The poll found that Thais held a generally negative view of foreign migrant workers in their country. Half of those polled indicated migrants should not enjoy the same working conditions as Thais and nearly 60% indicated they should not have the right to freedom of expression. Most of the 4,000 + respondents were of the view that migrants did not deserve the same pay as a Thai performing the same job, nor should they be allowed to form their own unions.

However, in 2008, the tragic deaths of more than 50 migrant workers from Myanmar, who suffocated in the back of a Thai lorry, evoked a

wave of public sympathy over their treatment – and anger at the subsequent response by the authorities in what some reports claimed was a rush to deport the survivors (the migrants were being clandestinely and illegally transported to work in another province when they died). The ILO’s East Asia Office, as well as many opinion leaders within the Thai media, pointed out the tragedy was rooted in a malfunctioning migration management system and urgent improvements were needed to streamline Thailand’s labour-migration system that would meet the needs of the migrants, Thai employers and those of the country’s economy in general in migrant-dependent sectors.

The findings of these controlled examinations of the media and public opinion clearly indicated a need for a systematic public awareness and migrant-advocacy campaign in migrant-dependent economies across the GMS to improve perceptions about the value such workers bring to those economies. The value of migrants (some 6% additional GDP in the case of Thailand)<sup>vii</sup> and the entry into force of a new anti-trafficking act in which employers face custodial sentences if found to be involved in labour trafficking, is one evident entry point for such a campaign.

### 3.4 Focusing on exploitation – destination-side programming

In the past, anti-trafficking efforts have rarely addressed the exploitation that takes place at a trafficking destination. However, by definition, it is the element of exploitation at destination that qualifies the movement of migration into a movement ending in trafficking. Ignoring this aspect of the process results in the loss of a valuable opportunity to counter trafficking – and the worst part of the exploitation.

Exploitation takes on different forms at different points in the trafficking process. At source, traffickers prey on people’s economic desperation, their lack of knowledge, and their trust by drawing them into sham recruitment schemes. These

recruiters will make deceptive promises or sometimes use threats and coercion.

During the journey, they again exploit the migrant’s desperation to find work by charging exorbitant transport costs, purloining documents or mistreating their victims.

And at destination, migrants are exploited primarily through unfair labour practices in a variety of labour sectors and in a variety of ways. When children—even those who moved and applied for jobs by their own volition—are involved and made to work in exploitive conditions, the case is labelled as ‘trafficking.’

Tackling exploitation at destination is therefore one of TICW’s most important and innovative contributions to the broader anti-trafficking discussion. TICW’s efforts to develop and pilot preventive destination-side programming is an acknowledgement of the real links between labour and trafficking, as well as the need for the ILO’s continuing drive for Decent Work. TICW’s destination-side programming, goes beyond the Decent Work agenda (for labour protection, social services, and the implementation and enforcement of labour standards,) though, in its targeted focus on labour sectors, like manufacturing/sweatshops, fishing, seafood processing, tourism/entertainment venues and commercial sex establishments where exploitation is rife.

**TICW has approached destination-side programmes as a prevention and protection opportunity, stopping migration from turning into trafficking.**

It’s important to recognize that TICW’s destination-side programming is not limited to those who have already been trafficked and victimized. Many of the programmes are preventative and protective in nature, and they aim to make sure migration does not lead to exploitation at the destination. In other words, it’s never too late to begin prevention work if the exploitation has yet to occur.





The focus on destination-side programming has engaged a new set of players in anti-trafficking efforts. The most notable of these are employers' and workers' organizations, groups with great power over labour conditions.

This is a particularly important breakthrough when it is considered that, for more than a decade, there has been confusion and much opportunity lost over the 'demand' debate. Though the term 'demand' is frequently thrown around, it is rarely defined and generally misunderstood. Trafficking 'demand' does not arise from a single factor, but results from a number of forces and actors that are present, at various stages of the trafficking process. TICW's work was very much inspired by this lack of clarity and the need to better understand the connection of trafficking destination and trafficking 'demand'.

**Trafficking 'demand' does not arise from a single factor, but results from a number of forces and actors that are present, at various stages of the trafficking process.**

Because the destination-side issue has been so rarely explored, TICW's work is still evolving. Even so, it has already yielded many lessons. One of them is the importance of appropriately and optimally targeting actions so that they reach the labour migrants who are most at risk of exploitation (or indeed already in an exploitative situation). For example, demand-side work has traditionally been aimed at the tourism and commercial sex industries. While these are high-risk sectors, they are also relatively visible and easy to reach, and it could be argued that this attention has sometimes come at the expense of progress in other more clandestine and exploitive work environments like industrial hard labour, sweatshops, agricultural, maritime or domestic work settings.

TICW's work has also offered lessons about common assumptions, particularly as they relate to labour sectors that are most often perceived to be exploitive. For example, research carried out for the Mekong Challenge series revealed that, contrary to conventional wisdom, the hotel and guesthouse sector in Siem Reap, Cambodia is a generally safe and regulated work environment for the young Cambodian women who work there.<sup>viii</sup>

It has been suggested that destination-side interventions pose considerable 'potential for harm'. In particular, there are concerns that employers may punish workers who they suspect have exposed poor or unfair working conditions, or that interventions may 'reward' rogue employers by involving them in training or beneficial schemes. Interventions may also cause governments to intensify efforts to detect and immediately deport irregular migrants, without the proper procedures to determine whether migrant workers with the irregular work status may in fact be victims of human trafficking.

Addressing these concerns is important, and it is critical that actions, whether they are implemented at source, destination or in transit areas, that these be regularly monitored for safety and effectiveness. Additionally, actions should be programmed as part of a more comprehensive strategy, and not as stand-alone interventions.

### *Examples*

#### **3.4.1. Child-safe tourism in Cambodia**

This programme, run in collaboration with the Ministries of Tourism, Labour, Interior, and Women's Affairs of the Royal Government of Cambodia, the private sector, unions, employers' organizations and NGOs, involved a nation-wide campaign to educate tourism sector operators and employees of the risks facing young workers (and sometimes child labourers) employed in the sector, and in how to promote 'Child-safe tourism'.

The project also provided capacity building and training efforts to ensure the sustainability of the programme. In addition, practical actions were implemented such as the operation of a Ministry of Interior hotline for the reporting of suspicious behaviour and the publication of guidelines and strategy manuals.

The campaign was aimed at hotels and brothels, and particularly those, which had been identified as workplaces where the risks of exploitation for

### Empowering children working as vendors on the beaches

For the Cambodian youth who work the country's beaches, selling trinkets and foodstuffs, risk of various exploitation and abuse is a daily reality. Accordingly, TICW's Child-safe tourism programme targeted the young workers with information about the risks of their work, as well as methods they can use to protect themselves.

The programme also trained families and teachers to serve as 'back-up' for the beach vendors. In addition to learning about the various risks confronting these children, the adult volunteers were educated about the rights of children, particularly to education, and on staging interventions to help child workers (re)integrate into a school community.

The programme reached child beach vendors through one-on-one advocacy work and group information sessions, in which the children were encouraged to share what they had learned and experienced with their peers. The efforts appear to have had significant impact: the children, who said the training had given them a better understanding of the risks and dangers they face. Many of them reported changing personal behaviours for their own protection, as a result. For example, many of the children now alert a friend when they go to a remote part of the beach, and refuse to accompany strangers to their hotels.

Follow-up focus groups with the child vendors demonstrated they had gained and adopted many practical protections, including moving around the beaches in groups; not trusting people 'hastily'; and waiting for, rather than accompanying a customer that says they have to fetch money from their hotel room.

The programme was also cost-effective. Relying on the training materials from the centrally based Child-Safe Tourism Commission, most of the programme's funding went towards outreach efforts, and training children, who in turn became peer educators to children who did not receive training. As with other components of the Child-safe tourism initiative, the intervention with child beach vendors highlights the effectiveness of micro-targeting and tailoring interventions that suit the specific needs and circumstances of at-risk groups.

children are highest. To strengthen and standardize the programme nationally, TICW encouraged information sharing and collaboration between districts. The programme has resulted in a coordinated community response and considerable progress in tackling dangers posed to children by the tourism industry.

The hospitality sector has assumed responsibility for this issue, government ministries have coordinated their efforts, and law enforcement has enhanced monitoring and attention to victim protection.

One of Cambodia's Child-safe tourism initiatives targeted youth that work as vendors, selling items on the beaches of Cambodia (see box).



### 3.4.2

#### **Working with women in prostitution in brothels, beer promotion and karaoke workers in Sihanouk Ville**

TICW promoted peer education within the community of brothel-based women in prostitution and karaoke bar and beer promotion attendants in Sihanouk Ville, Cambodia – the country’s main seaside resort and deep sea port – and a main destination for both foreign and domestic tourists and businesspeople. The network of women in prostitution, which has also forged close links with TICW’s NGO partners and the local police, has developed an innovative system for training and disseminating information about risk, protection, and general safety tips to the members of their communities.

The network of peer educators, comprised of 25 women in prostitution as well as from the entertainment sector (e.g. karaoke bar attendants and beer promotion girls/women), was trained with a particular focus on trafficking prevention. Among other skills, the women learned how to communicate anti-trafficking messages and advice, and how to serve in a ‘watchdog’ role, monitoring and assisting troubled members of their ‘workplace’ communities.

While the network is vital in raising community awareness, it also plays an important role in enhancing anti-trafficking law enforcement in Sihanouk Ville.

When peer educators encounter young women in prostitution, abusive work conditions, or other evidence of exploitation, they contact an NGO partner, who then contacts the Police Chief or Deputy Chief of the Sihanouk Ville Municipal Anti-Trafficking Unit. In addition to providing immediate assistance, peer educators met monthly with NGO staff and the Police Anti-Trafficking Unit to share information about trafficking cases, dubious establishments, and dangerous industry trends like debt bondage and the circulation of women in prostitution between brothels. This is a

good example of how young people working within potentially exploitative sectors can participate and be empowered to contribute to trafficking prevention efforts. In this case, the women were also consulted in designing and developing aspects of the peer education programme of which they were a part. Their input helped inform programme procedures like the selection of peer educators and guidelines for community networking.

The women reported being positively and meaningfully affected by the programme. Many had changed personal behaviours or attitudes as a result of the TICW-led intervention. All the women in prostitution knew the number for the police hotline, and said they used it if a client abused them. Others reported gaining skills to negotiate conditions and terms of ‘employment’ with brothel owners, and customers. These skills are particularly important for the women to protect themselves, and to reduce the risk of their exploitation.

### 3.4.3

#### **Young women working in hotels and restaurants in Sihanouk Ville**

Another component of the Child-safe tourism project focussed on the young women working in Sihanouk Ville’s hotels, guesthouses, and restaurants. In a process that engaged employers, business owners, and the women workers themselves, TICW worked to improve safety for workers in the city’s tourism sector. While many of the larger hotels already followed workplace regulations imposed by foreign investors, there were reports of substandard working conditions in smaller establishments. Using a group of committed and conscientious employers as a base, TICW was able to build a community of responsible employers in Sihanouk Ville’s tourism sector that can apply pressure and spread positive work practices to the city’s more exploitative establishments in the future.

### 3.4.4

## Young women on the move in China: The women's homes in Yunnan Province

TICW's first involvement with women's homes in Yunnan Province, China, dates back to 2001, when the project helped establish 53 homes to be used as information sharing centres in 12 particularly vulnerable villages in Jiangcheng and Menghai Counties in Simao and Xishangbanna Prefectures. The villages had all been identified as a source of many of China's internally trafficked women. Twenty-three more women's homes were also opened in Kunming City, the major destination point for Yunnan's labour migrants.

These homes are not 'homes' in the traditional sense, but rather drop-in centres, and essentially provide a place where women can come to receive the information, training, and other services that reduce the likelihood that they will be trafficked (source-side) or exploited (destination-side). Many of the centres offer capacity building activities for the women, which include receiving information on trafficking, legal literacy and self-protection. The homes also provide a forum for provincial authorities to distribute information for safe employment and migration. While the homes help to ensure future safety for these women, they also provide a safe and comfortable space where women can hold meetings and socialize. Over time, these women's centres have become an important hub for other activities, including skills development, cultural activities and entertainment.

One interesting aspect of this programme is that it targeted women considered to be at risk of exploitation (not necessarily just at risk of trafficking) because of their migrant status and lack of understanding of their rights. This is a new approach because most actions of this nature have traditionally been directed only at trafficking victims.

A variety of players are responsible for the success of these centres. Village committees provided buildings for the cause, while the All China Women's Federation operated them and supplied various materials. The Agriculture and Justice Bureaus provided library materials and TICW provided audio-visual equipment for the development of videos and DVDs with information on safe migration and work.

In a promising sign of their value and sustainability, 21 of the Yunnan women's homes, have remained open and operating since TICW funding ended. The programme primarily targets migrant women who are vulnerable to exploitation (not necessarily just for trafficking) because of their lack of understanding about legal rights. This marks a shift from the past approach, in which only trafficking victims were targeted with assistance.

TICW's destination-side programming has fundamentally altered the nature of anti-trafficking efforts designed for the 'end' of the trafficking chain. In the past, programmes at this stage, have focussed on trafficking victims and their rehabilitation; TICW's efforts instead emphasise prevention and helping people to avoid exploitation before they become victims at the destination.

### 3.4.5

## Reaching out to migrant youth in Thailand's migrant-communities

Reaching out to young migrants in receiving countries isn't always as easy as one might expect. Often these young migrants have crossed borders and are undocumented when they arrive – essentially they are residing in the receiving country unlawfully. Given they could be arrested and deported, their families (e.g. if they've come with parents – many come with friends), are hesitant to venture out looking for assistance, advice or even to socialize.

Whilst section 3.3.2 (Travel Smart – Work Smart) offered ways for migrants of working age to avoid abuse – regardless of their documented status – younger migrant children need special attention that goes beyond this.





### Reaching out to child domestic workers:

In Thailand, TICW worked with the NGO Foundation for Child Development to reach out to one of the hardest groups of migrants to reach – children employed in households or family-run shops in destination areas.

While these children can be either foreign or domestic, in recent years, due largely to the improved economic situation within Thailand, better work opportunities and the effective expansion of compulsory education in remote areas, the number of Thai domestic workers has declined. However, non-government organizations estimate that more than 100,000 women and girls from Myanmar, Lao PDR and Cambodia have taken the place of young Thais – and are employed as domestic workers (based on official migrant registration figures).

Because domestic work is regarded as in the informal sector, it is not protected by labour laws. This can mean that several thousand teenagers work as household servants, without a clear guarantee of their wages, their holidays or their welfare. NGOs in Thailand estimate that girls younger than 18 years are the largest group of live-in servants and that many of them work in exploitative conditions. Both child and women domestic workers often labour for long hours and sometimes in hazardous conditions; many of them suffer physical or mental abuse. A Mahidol University survey in 2004 found that working conditions of Burmese domestic workers (including children) in Chiang Mai and Mae Sot were virtually slave-like, with more than half reporting verbal abuse, and more than 14 per cent were victims of sexual abuse.<sup>ix</sup>

The FCD, supported by TICW, first facilitated the establishment of a core working group, led by the Ministry of Labour (MOL) and in particular its Department of Labour Protection and Welfare, and with participants from the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS), concerned legal and academic institutes and NGOs. They then developed a Ministerial Regulation administering the employment of domestic workers and then advocated for Cabinet approval of it.

The draft Ministerial Regulation sets the minimum standards for domestic workers and relates to

Thailand's Labour Protection Act and its Child Protection Act for working age, basic salary, working hours, weekly rest days, food, conditions of accommodation and medical coverage. A public hearing followed. If everything goes according to plan, the Ministerial Regulation was to be signed by the Minister of Labour before the end of 2008 and then annexed to the Labour Protection Act.

More immediate results, and as part of its overall advocacy campaign via the media, cases of abuse were brought to FCD's attention, resulting in the rescue of 81 child domestic workers.

### Reaching out to the Thai public to help child beggars

The ILO supported one of Thailand's leading media-arts NGOs, Mirror Art Foundation to sensitize the Thai public about the realities of child begging on the streets of Bangkok and other urban areas. Through a multi-media campaign, MAF explained that children and women seen together on the streets begging for money were most often trafficked by criminal gangs and forced to beg. The money of course was then confiscated by the gangs with their victims receiving only a pittance. While the campaign has not eliminated this abusive practice, it has heightened awareness about where the money actually ends up – and it is hoped will slowly reduce the numbers of children and women being forced to beg.

### Reaching out to migrant children and their families – the LPN Story

In Bangkok's neighbouring province of Samut Sakhon, one of Southeast Asia's biggest seafood processing areas, live hundreds of thousands of migrants from Myanmar. Each day the majority of them – adults and children alike – report for work to shell shrimp/prawns and man the decks of fishing boats or serve as labourers in the various other dockside activities required by this multi-billion dollar industry. Thousands of these children should of course be in school. Thailand has pledged, by way of Cabinet Decree, to ensure universal education for all children, regardless of nationality or documentation, but in practice access to state schools for most of

## A right to learn - LPN

LPN organized meetings among relevant agency officials to make them aware of the national policy to provide stateless children the opportunity to attend school. Those early meetings emphasized the principle that everyone attending had some responsibility in addressing the situation of child labour, proper law enforcement and compliance. The meetings had impact, helping to reduce negative attitudes among the general public and encouraging the enrolment of migrant children in both formal and informal education. The positive attitude among the provincial authorities towards the education of migrant children contributed significantly to the performance of relevant labour and education agencies. Schools that were beginning to enrol migrant children became more confident to continue the practice.

To prepare migrant children for enrolment in a formal school, the LPN and its volunteers met with working and nonworking child migrants and their parents to:

- Talk about the transition and what would be expected.
- Record information on the family for entry into a research database
- Raise awareness among child and adult workers on the worst forms of child labour.
- Create a labour rights protection volunteer network.
- Rescue any child from an abusive labour situation.
- Advocate policy changes to facilitate access to rights among migrant labours and their families.

Working with educators, LPN developed a preparatory education model for migrant children.

Essentially, children were given access to six-month preparatory classes that included Thai language basics as well as social etiquette, Thai law and life skills. Initially two schools took part and by the final year of the project, some migrant children were attending regular school classes alongside Thai children.

these children remains out of reach. However, that is slowly changing for some, thanks to the work of TICW and LPN.

In 2005, the TICW project led the way in support of, what was then a little known group, the Labour Rights Promotion Network – LPN – who offered to access migrant children in Samut Sakhon and provide them with informal education. The main objective was to help them and their families more

easily integrate into Thai society – and for the children to eventually enter the regular school system. Other UN Agencies and NGOs have since recognized the valuable contribution made by LPN and are now working with the group. In 2008, the United States Department of State also recognized the contribution of LPN and honoured its founder Sompong Sakaew with a special feature article in its annual Trafficking in Persons Report.



### 3.5

## **‘Packaged programming’ – holistic approaches at both source and destination**

TICW has experimented with several new approaches to prevent trafficking, particularly by focussing their efforts on the destination side. While fresh and innovative anti-trafficking efforts can be extremely valuable, it is equally important that such programming is carefully and thoroughly considered. There is always the chance that interventions can have long-term unexpected and unintended effects, and programmes need to be designed carefully to minimize this risk.

For example, while micro-finance intervention can help raise people out of poverty, it can also fuel desire of recipients to seek a still-better life elsewhere, thus increasing their vulnerability to unscrupulous recruitment or unsafe migration. Yet, while this possible consequence is known, it has been repeatedly ignored and programming implemented without addressing the risk.

The key to minimizing risk is to ‘package’ interventions like micro-finance with a combination of actions that will counter-balance negative outcomes. For example, individuals that receive micro-credit assistance should be made aware of all its implications. It is critical they receive the complete ‘package’ of knowledge and understand the risks, as well as the rewards of micro-credit schemes.

**The key to minimizing risk is to ‘package’ interventions like micro-finance with a combination of actions that will counter-balance any negative outcomes.**

At a minimum, micro-finance or income generation ‘packages’, should also include education capacity building, and vocational training. Income

generation projects should never be a stand-alone intervention, and should not be considered anti-trafficking actions (although they are often presented that way). While micro-credit schemes can certainly play a role in improving lives and livelihoods, such schemes would be more correctly labelled as poverty-reduction initiatives.

TICW has also promoted holistic anti-trafficking programming by addressing each step of the trafficking chain: source, movement and destination. Realizing TICW cannot be everywhere, the project has emphasized strategic partnerships between governments, labour partners, NGOs and program beneficiaries, themselves. Additionally, TICW has encouraged the development of collaborative, multi-sector frameworks, such as National Plans of Action, which provide a ‘blueprint’ for different stakeholders to better coordinate anti-trafficking efforts.

‘Packages’, then, can mean three separate things:

- Combinations of programmes that together, minimize risks that might arise for beneficiaries as their circumstances change;
- Holistic approaches that consider the trafficking phenomenon as a series of linked events, all of which require different but simultaneous responses;
- Comprehensive planning, processes and partnerships that reflect the multi-faceted nature of the anti-trafficking response and the multi-disciplinary approach to effective action.

TICW worked only in select geographical areas, which were chosen because research indicated that they were sites where people were particularly at risk. Again, TICW can not be everywhere, and it is noted that, where coverage is not comprehensive, there is always a possibility of a ‘displacement and replacement’ (also called ‘push down/pop up’) effect—where targeting one group of at-risk people may simply shift problems and risks to another group. For this reason, TICW has stressed the importance of identifying effective initiatives that can be easily expanded to other communities.

### 3.5.1 Integrated planning at provincial level

#### *Examples*

#### **Cambodia's Child Protection Committees**

TICW has always prioritized the development of strong networks and organizations—across geographical, political and societal sectors—with the idea that such connections yield stronger, more effective responses. For example, TICW helped to facilitate relationships between community and provincial leadership in four of Cambodia's border provinces. In doing so, the local and provincial anti-trafficking plans and strategies were coordinated and oriented toward common goals.

Similarly, the Child Protection Committees set up in the TICW's initial stages were later expanded into a more coordinated body across seven provinces.

At the provincial level, Child Protection Committees were comprised of government and NGO representatives who together developed Child-safe tourism action and implementation plans. The organisations have been credited for strengthening coordination and cooperation at all project levels: provincial, municipal and commune. Because of the various nature of committee members and the connections they have forged with local authorities, the network has comprehensive knowledge and a great potential to reduce trafficking.

TICW also supported integrated planning processes at provincial and local levels in Viet Nam, holistic plans in Lao PDR and provincial plans in Prey Veng and Sihanouk Ville in Cambodia. The China Yunnan Holistic Provincial Plan of Action was the first provincial level Plan in China, preceding the National Plan by four years and contributing a strong prevention element to the China National Plan, which was completed in January 2008. The Provincial Plan provided a comprehensive strategy, which included micro-finance, education, agriculture, labour migration, gender equality and safe migration anti-trafficking interventions, even after TICW funding had ended, with significant government budget allocations.

### **Keeping the balance and focus in packaged programming**

TICW's project experience in Lao PDR brought an important lesson regarding the implementation of 'packaged' interventions. Though TICW designed an intervention strategy that included education and training in addition to micro-finance, it became obvious that the approach was not balanced or well integrated. The micro-finance component received ongoing attention, while the other initiatives were short episodes that were quickly forgotten.

The Lao PDR 'package' intervention provided participants with access to Village Development Funds (VDFs), trafficking information, vocational training and job creation initiatives. An external impact assessment exercise noted that TICW was "leading the way in promoting VDFs as a community-building tool that paves the way for an improved economic situation for many communities". The government adopted the strategy, but the initiative soon lost anti-trafficking as a primary focus and became a showcase poverty-reduction/community-building exercise. This is always a risk, and accordingly, it is important to fully communicate the rationale and importance of the 'package' approach to vested parties, so that one element does not dominate at the expense of others.

### 3.5.2 **Taking a multi-disciplinary approach to local initiatives**

In Thailand's Phayao province, TICW helped to establish a mechanism that assisted local and provincial government officials to comprehensively analyze and address human trafficking. This tool helped to clarify anti-trafficking issues and objectives for government leaders, as well as to increase their willingness to work more systematically with NGOs.

In Lao PDR, TICW worked with the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare's Child Labour and Child Trafficking Office (CLCTO) to improve the capacity of local bodies in project management, policy coordination, and monitoring and reporting skills.





Subsequently, the CLCTO became the agency responsible for coordination of child labour and human trafficking issues, an active member of the

COMMIT Taskforce, and a participant in the drafting committee for the National Plan of Action on Human Trafficking.

### Phayao multidisciplinary teams

The landmark Memorandum of Understanding that nine northern provinces of Thailand adopted in 2003 promised action to help trafficking victims. To fulfil this promise, each province was required to set up a mechanism to develop and implement policies, plans and prevention activities.

Phayao, one of the nine provinces, is a major source and transit point for girls and women who are trafficked domestically and across borders into prostitution.

In an effort led by Phayao's provincial governor and supported by TICW, the province developed a six-part action plan to implement the MoU. Its six phases included prevention, suppression and law enforcement, victim rescue and protection, rehabilitation, system management, and policy development. Teams, or subcommittees, were set up to oversee the rescue of children and women, legal issues, rehabilitation, coordination, policy making and the collecting, analysing and distribution of information/data. An operation centre to help victims of trafficking was established.

The governor chairs the centre, and the provincial Social Development and Welfare Office acts as its secretariat. All key provincial government offices, including the provincial education office, health office, labour office, and statistics office are involved with the effort. Members of the police and the provincial attorney's office as well as from local NGOs also cooperate with the centre.

Government officials in the province decided to go beyond what their neighbours who signed the MoU were doing. They set up counterpart centres in nine districts. These District Operating Centres (DOCs) are the focal points for cooperation between different government departments and others from the provincial to the district level. The DOCs receive and act on calls for assistance; they conduct investigations; and provide physical, emotional and social rehabilitation services for trafficked children and women, their family and community, and return them, if safe, to their home. The DOCs also coordinate multi-sector collaboration with all relevant parties, report outcomes of action to the provincial operating centre, and establish and appoint working groups or individuals to focus on protecting children's and women's rights.

The involvement of different levels of government has improved communication, coordination, referral and other actions to protect victims of trafficking. The various organizations, agencies and departments involved in overseeing the DOCs have improved anti-trafficking efforts, with each representative bringing individual strengths and contacts to the group. Three hundred and six community watchdog volunteers in 124 villages have been trained. The volunteers have surveyed their district and compiled a list of all children with notes on their economic and social welfare situation. Efforts have been made to address citizenship issues for young people who have foreign fathers and Thai mothers. This is crucial support because those without citizenship are highly likely to migrate and to be vulnerable to trafficking.

### 3.6

## Focusing on process and partnerships to reinforce actions

From the outset, TICW emphasized the importance of process and partnerships, aiming to realize these just as much as concrete results/output.

Developing usable, acceptable processes and building the partnerships necessary to carry them out is crucial to ensuring that anti-trafficking efforts are expanded, standardized and sustained.

Experiences have not always been positive – some processes (perhaps because of translation issues) have proved not to be user-friendly and have required retooling. The Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation process, for example, was found to be correct in theory, and while popular in at least 2 project countries (China and Thailand) but users in other countries found it too complicated to use.

Building partnerships around joint processes is also important for reinforcing other non-TICW ILO initiatives in a given place, for example processes relating to the development and implementation of Time-Bound Programmes, Decent Work initiatives and Child Labour work in general. The same actors will be involved, and it is worth noting that the most important and influential of these actors – Ministries of Labour, employers and workers' organizations – are not always engaged in initiatives for children, or with NGOs or others who focus solely on children's rights and welfare rather than labour.

TICW has worked closely with provincial and local-level government departments, in the implementation of the Memorandum of Understandings on cross-border employment cooperation between Thailand and Lao PDR, and between Thailand and Cambodia, and to COMMIT.

In relation to this TICW experience, the specific actions that have been undertaken are not as important as the overall approach. What TICW has contributed is improved capacity, process, and working systems. Often these may not seem important, but here again TICW seems to have set a path that others are now travelling down – testament to the effectiveness of the approach.

### Examples

#### 3.6.1

### Building partnerships through technical support

TICW worked to support provincial authorities in Yunnan, China, to make trafficking prevention mechanisms, systems and approaches a mainstream component of governmental work. This resulted in greater cooperation in preventing trafficking in and among several branches of provincial government.

The project also gave much needed support to the Child Labour and Child Trafficking Office in Lao PDR and the Ministry of Labour and was an important partner in developing new legislation, including on trafficking. TICW also worked with the Lao PDR National Committee for Human Trafficking and contributed to the National Plan of Action on Human Trafficking.

In Cambodia, TICW supported the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training, and in China the Department of Labour, where it helped develop improved recruitment guidelines and Provincial Project Steering Committee policy papers on human trafficking and combating it at the local level.

The *Operational Guidelines on the Prevention, Suppression, Assistance and Protection of Persons Trafficked for Labour Purposes* (the Guidelines) are a joint project of the Ministry of Labour (MOL) and the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS), with technical and financial support provided by the TICW and TBP teams, ILO. The purpose of the Guidelines is to address an identified gap in the management of cases of labour trafficking in Thailand. In particular, the Guidelines are designed as an instructive tool for the MOL, to more clearly define its role and responsibilities in responding to cases of labour trafficking. The Guidelines were developed through a lengthy consultative process with Thai government and non-government agencies. On 30 April 2008, the Guidelines were approved and signed by representatives of the MOL and MSDHS.



The Guidelines supplement the Thai domestic *Memorandum of Understanding on Operational Procedures for Concerned Agencies in Combating Human Trafficking in the Southern Central Provinces*. The Guidelines are also consistent with the new Thai law on trafficking which, amongst other things, significantly broadens

the protections afforded to victims of trafficking in Thailand and formally recognizes forced labour as an outcome of trafficking. TICW and TBP are working with the Royal Thai Government to develop a training proposal for implementation of the Guidelines.

### **The Chiang Mai Coordination Centre for the Protection of Children's and Women's Rights and its alliance-building project**

When the Chiang Mai Coordination Centre for the Protection of Children's and Women's Rights opened in 2004, it included among its activities plans to identify business owners and entrepreneurs who violate labour laws through their involvement in trafficking. They also recognized that they could bring in reputable employers and business owners as allies in efforts to combat the problem.

With support from TICW, the Centre first approached the Office of Welfare and Labour Protection to identify 'good' business owners and employers. These were people who were known to abide by labour laws, who were properly registered and who regularly provided training to their employees on labour laws and labour welfare.

The Centre then sought out business owners and employers to help develop appropriate media and a campaign to raise awareness among employers on trafficking and exploitation. They aimed to create materials that were relevant and responsive, that used the same language as the targeted business owners, employers and their customers.

Having established a working relationship, the Centre staff then asked the employer partners to help collect data on the demand for labour, conditions of work and living conditions (where they existed) within the workplace as well as information on ethnicity and the social/economic and health situation of employees. This information was fed into the trafficking database.

To further groom employers (both those considered 'good' and 'shady'), Centre staff ran a one-day seminar for 63 business owners and employers to help them learn more about trafficking and exploitation, labour laws, human rights and children's rights.

The ultimate aim was to encourage them to work with the Centre in identifying and preventing cases of trafficking. This included changing customers' (and employees') attitudes and behaviours regarding the sexual exploitation of children and forced labour.

At the end of the seminar, participants were asked to sign a commitment that reads, "We will cooperate in human trafficking prevention and surveillance in our business and will participate in the network and we will release and reveal all the media and publications related to anti-trafficking issue to our personnel and customers." Forty-seven of them signed and, since the seminar, there has been a notable increase in notifications to the Centre of possible cases of trafficking.

The Coordination Centre awards, with accompanying media attention, business owners who have taken the anti-trafficking issue seriously. Three had been recognized by mid-2008: Novotel Hotel, Central Daungtawan Hotel and Princess Food Company, Ltd.

### 3.6.2 Strengthening alliances with trade unions and business

#### Advocating for migrants' rights with trade unions

When it comes to defending and advocating for the rights of all workers, trade unions can be a natural partner. But would trade unions also speak out for *foreign* migrant workers? In Thailand this concern was laid to rest in August 2005. A meeting of four of Thailand's leading workers' umbrella organizations, the Labour Congress of Thailand (LCT), the National Congress of Thai Labour (NCTL), the Thai Trade Union Congress (TTUC) and the State Enterprises Workers' Relations Confederation (SERC), joined an ILO sponsored meeting in Phuket Province to discuss ways in which they could show solidarity with non-organized foreign migrant workers in Thailand.

The result was the *Phuket Declaration* and its recommendations which, among other things, called for better recognition of foreign migrants' needs and to offer them membership in Thai unions, educating their own existing members about the value that migrants bring to the economy and the workplace and coordinating efforts with unions in other neighbouring countries.

In the cases of domestic migrants, as mentioned earlier, in Viet Nam the Viet Nam General Confederation of Labour worked to educate migrants in main urban and industrial areas about their labour rights, and to whom to turn should those rights be violated. They were strong partners in the dissemination of the Travel Smart – Work Smart campaign.

#### Working with employers' organizations to tackle exploitation

Employers can be a vital partner in implementing destination-side anti-trafficking programming. In Viet Nam, TICW worked with the Viet Nam Chamber for Commerce and Industry (VCCI) to organize a panel discussion with employers, on the subject of internal labour migration and young people.

The participating employers came from sectors in Ho Chi Minh City—the garment, footwear, handicraft and food processing industries—that attract the majority of young migrant workers. The panel discussion brought the first-ever attempt to involve the VCCI and its members in anti-trafficking efforts, as well as the realization that community business leaders were interested and ready to contribute to the mission.

The panel discussion led to the development of a business community action programme which called for the training of a core group of 8 VCCI staff members and 12 participants from business associations and businesswomen's clubs in Quang Ninh, Thanh Hoa and Ho Chi Minh City. The professionals were educated on subjects like fair recruitment and hiring practices for women migrants.

In addition, 120 Ho Chi Minh City business representatives participated in capacity building activities, which taught them to address and respond to likely cases of trafficking and exploitation. At the community level, these 120 representatives were expected to then become secondary trainers—first among their own enterprises and then others—to promote trafficking prevention (using the 'Travel Smart – Work Smart' framework) and good practices in recruitment and hiring of migrants.

*The considerable interest of Viet Nam's business community to address trafficking shows the potential and value in involving employers in destination-side programming.*

In the capital of China's Yunnan Province, an employers' organization in Kunming City also proved that employers can play a positive and pro-active role in the fight against trafficking for labour exploitation – and that there's a good reason for doing so.





### Making a 'Business Case' in Yunnan, China

The Kunming City Private Economy Association (KMPEA), a mass organization consisting of more than 500,000 private business employers, collaborated with TICW to educate its members on the negative impact of human trafficking and labour exploitation and thus mobilize the private sector across Yunnan Province to take up a role in the prevention of exploitative practices. This initiative was the first of its kind by an employers' organization in China.

Prospective participants were told employee turnover was costly in terms of training new workers and the loss of production skills and that turnover was strongly linked to poor working conditions or exploitative labour practices. They were also told that labour exploitation domestically is a cause for consumer boycotts internationally, and if Chinese employers want to participate in global competition, they will need to satisfy different labour standards: Consumers are paying more attention to labour malpractices, including child labour and lack of social security for workers, and they are looking to buy products from enterprises that treat employees decently.

They agreed on a code of conduct that was then circulated as a "commitment letter" among private enterprise employers throughout Kunming City: They agreed:

- Employers must hire employees through legal channels, follow the labour laws and avoid hiring trafficked persons, directly or indirectly.
- Employers have a responsibility to inform employees about human-trafficking risks and prevention.
- Employers must abide by laws to guarantee employees' wages, decent work time, labour security and to protect their legal rights.
- Employers should check an employee's identity with original papers and registration.
- Employers should respect moral employment practices.
- Employers are requested to set up a mechanism for employees to stay connected with their families and have decent working conditions.
- Employers must report on any illegal employment practices of other employers.

Seventy-four influential employers signed the commitment letter, entitled "Better Self-Monitoring, Follow the Labour Law, Eliminate Gender Discrimination, Stop Illegal Employment and Exploitation and Contribute to the Efforts of Preventing and Combating Trafficking". The KMPEA then developed and printed 11,000 copies of an employer's handbook on trafficking, labour exploitation and gender issues for distribution among private enterprise owners.

#### 3.6.3

#### Engaging the media as partners

In Lao PDR, TICW worked with UNIAP and Save the Children to engage the media as partners in efforts to combat human trafficking. The important element of these efforts was viewing the media as 'partners', rather than just an outlet for information, as is so often the case.

This approach recognizes the way the media works, the importance to professionals of editorial independence and non-partisan reporting, and the reluctance of most media organizations to see themselves as 'outlets' for other organization's information or campaigns. Engaging the media as partners builds a partnership of trust based on the sharing of reliable information and skills. It often begins with capacity building on an issue that the media

report on but may not have detailed understanding of, and often results additionally in an ongoing relationship that gives the anti-trafficking organization ‘trusted source’ status and so the ability to get messages out more readily through media partners.

**Engaging the media as partners builds a partnership of trust based on the sharing of reliable information and skills.**

The TICW/UNIAP/Save actions resulted in better media understanding of the issues and increased media coverage of anti-trafficking messages. Media training by TICW and partners in Thailand had similarly positive results.

### 3.6.4 Aligning with the UN and the International NGO Community

Engaging other UN specialized agencies and International NGO’s was not just a matter of common-sense it was also in keeping with the spirit of the TICW project’s participatory approaches to counter trafficking. Working with the UNIAP, a project administered by the UNDP which also plays the role of the secretariat to the Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking, was key to ensuring that the project’s work was seen by the GMS Governments (as the owners of the COMMIT process) to be contributing to their plans of action.

The TICW project also supported not just its own series of trainings on counter-trafficking courses, but advised on the UNIAP’s sub-regional training programmes held in Khon Kaen. Through the years the project also partnered on various occasions with the International Organization for Migration – particularly with collaborative work on victim return and rehabilitation.

The four year partnership with Save the Children UK, and later with World Vision, also paid dividends in that the TICW agenda of prevention and participation could be furthered through the work of these high profile international NGOs.

## 3.7 Beyond participation to mobilization and empowerment

Participation is often described as ‘giving women and children a voice’, but in fact this undersells the results of good participation actions. TICW’s work in this area has gone beyond simple participation and is a good example of mobilization, engagement and empowerment. This is because of the processes involved, which in many cases have included capacity building and training, shifting the leadership of the action from TICW to the partner organizations involved and empowering the women’s organizations to become stronger anti-trafficking actors. The kind of ‘participation’ that TICW has undertaken is fundamental to ensuring ‘ownership’ of the trafficking problem and responses to it, as well as to making sure that the responses are mainstreamed and sustained after TICW support ends.

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In the case of the Mekong Children’s Forum and later with the Mekong Youth Forum, TICW and its main institutional NGO partner, Save the Children UK, took the process beyond child participation to real empowerment of the young people involved. The mobilization and empowerment of these young people is an important achievement in moving towards sustainable action.

This is an important outcome of TICW. Too often ‘participation’ means just inviting people to join in for a short time and then abandoning them. TICW has tried to build processes with and around people, so that they are integral to what is happening.



*Examples:***3.7.1****The Mekong Children and Youth Forums**

In partnership with Save the Children UK, TICW brought together a group of young people in preparation for the initial ministerial meeting that established the COMMIT (Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking) process. The children and young people met in five national provincial children's forums – in Cambodia, Yunnan and Guangxi Provinces of China, Lao PDR, the far northern provinces of Thailand and Viet Nam. In total, hundreds of children were involved in the preparations for these national meetings – with five from each chosen by their peers to attend the sub-regional event in Bangkok.

Most of the children came from communities affected by trafficking. They included stateless children from minorities and some children who had themselves experienced trafficking or labour exploitation. In each national event, the children met with senior representatives of their governments and presented an anti-trafficking agenda for action.

Then, in October 2004, delegates elected by the children travelled to Bangkok for a sub-regional meeting and there drafted a set of Mekong Children's Recommendations on Human Trafficking. These were transmitted to the Yangon, Myanmar, meeting of ministers from the sub-region later that month, as they came together to sign the Memorandum of Understanding on trafficking known as COMMIT. Officials of all six governments signing the Memorandum took time out to review the recommendations from the Children's Forum,

The youth delegates left the sub-regional meeting hopeful and enthusiastic, committed to following up their work in their home countries. In concrete terms, though, the success of the Forum could only be measured by the extent to which the COMMIT process itself integrated the Forum recommendations and representation.

A number of the young people mobilized for the Forum continue to be very active in national Save

the Children and ILO programmes. This is an important step in preparing young people to work for their own rights and those of their peers and in influencing policy in the long term.

In a second stage in the sub-regional process, UNIAP and World Vision International joined TICW and Save the Children UK to support a second Mekong Youth Forum in September 2007. This was intended to provide a venue for children to make their views on trafficking known, to demonstrate the value of participatory approaches in finding sustainable solutions to trafficking, and also to review recent policies and programmes against trafficking at the sub-regional level. Again, there were preparatory meetings in the six COMMIT countries, and this time the National COMMIT Task Force in each country participated. Again also, the government officials meeting to review the COMMIT process joined the young people to discuss their approaches and recommendations before taking these to the fifth COMMIT senior officials' meeting in Beijing in December 2007.

In terms of government response, there are indications that the Mekong Youth Forum is having an effect and that the children are being heard. For example: the Royal Thai Government expressed interest in incorporating the children's recommendations into their national agenda; at the COMMIT Senior Officials Meeting, the Lao Government acknowledged the Children's Forum, children's participation and their desire to participate; in the national forum in Cambodia in 2004, the Royal Cambodian Government pledged that the children's recommendations would be included in their National Plan of Action against trafficking; China committed to holding a nationwide children's forum on trafficking, whereas in the past they have only agreed to provincial forums; and at the COMMIT Senior Officials Meeting in December 2007, the Forum was granted 30 minutes on the agenda.

It is also reported that the very act of 'priming' adult interlocutors to know how to interact with children was a positive step forward in mainstreaming children's views in national policy. While it is important to be clear that at this stage the main impact is on the people involved – children and adults, at different levels

– the main advocacy aim was also achieved. Representatives from all six Governments attending the COMMIT meeting in Beijing signed a joint-declaration which, among other things – and for the first time—pledged to consult with, and allow for, the participation of young people and other vulnerable groups in further policy planning on counter-trafficking. A psychological milestone had been reached and a major objective had been achieved.

### 3.7.2

#### The Mekong Women's Forum

TICW's aim to go beyond participation and move to mobilization, engagement and empowerment is well illustrated through the participation initiatives it has developed with women's organizations in the sub-region. These include the All China Women's Federation, the Lao Women's Federation and the Viet Nam Women's Union. Through their partnerships with TICW, these groups have been more involved at local levels, and this in turn has increased their influence at the national level on human trafficking. In the summer of 2007, a significant step to link these groups together occurred at the sub-region's first gathering of influential women to discuss trafficking at The Mekong Women's Forum, held at Hanoi, and hosted by the Viet Nam Women's Union.

## 3.8

### Building the knowledge base and Sharing the Tools to target interventions more effectively

#### 3.8.1

##### The Research:

Perhaps because research is done by researchers and programmes are implemented by implementing agencies, there is often a gap between the

knowledge that becomes available and the impact it has on action. Lessons from TICW showed clearly that it is important not only to build a solid knowledge base but also to design research projects in such a way that they can be used to develop plans for action. TICW therefore had built into it research activities that would help to underpin the development of action programmes linked to the labour migration paradigm and focusing on prevention and on destination-side interventions.

It is important not only to build a solid knowledge base but also to design research projects in such a way that they can be used to develop plans for action.

The TICW project laid down the baselines for the next steps required. They showed beyond question that there is a link between the migration of young people, across borders, sub-regionally in the GMS – and made recommendations for urgent action to address the issues.

At a programming level, a number of knowledge-based actions were also undertaken: the Chiang Mai database and baseline surveys at local level already described are further examples of these practical information outputs.

The important thing to note here is that TICW did not attempt to generate knowledge for the sake of knowledge but to use research and information-centred actions either to further understanding that would feed directly into programme development, or provide tools for those implementing action programmes.

This is an important message, since too often research and publications are produced as stand-alone outputs with no obvious 'life' beyond dissemination. It is this 'information as a basis for action' approach that differentiates TICW's knowledge products from so many other such outputs.







## 3.8.2

### The Tools:

The following are practical tools developed by the project through its 8 operational years and reflect the shifting emphasis in its orientation and programming and the learning from its research. Here is a sample summary, though all of the tools can be downloaded from the project's Website [www.childtrafficking.net](http://www.childtrafficking.net)

**Proven Practices Summaries** are a kit of 25 proven practices from the five countries in which the TICW project complied following eight years of experience. The kit includes two sub-regional practices and a number of shared experiences and lessons learned from the early years – 2000-3003. These SELL notes from the pilot phase in the early years are useful as comparisons to more recently endorsed practices, and most still provide valuable learning for practitioners. As with all our tools, all of these Proven Practices as well as the older SELLS – are available for download at [www.childtrafficking.net](http://www.childtrafficking.net)

**Promotion of Gender Equality in Action against Child Labour and Trafficking** aims to provide an overview of strategies and tools to reach both girls and boys when combating harmful child labour practices and trafficking abuse, to address the specific constraints of girls and young women prone to or engaged in child labour, and to strengthen the role of parents in educating their children and protecting them from labour exploitation. It is useful for specialists and programming staff in the child labour field who are not familiar with gender equality issues or who wish to refresh their knowledge on this subject. Additionally, it is a practical tool for policy makers engaged in promoting human rights of children and women and fundamental principles and rights at work. Staff members and partner organizations of the ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) will also be better equipped with knowledge and skills to develop, implement and evaluate gender-responsive action programmes.

**GET Ahead for Women in Enterprise Training Package and Resource Kit** aims to assist ILO partner organizations in promoting enterprise development among women in poverty who want to start or are already engaged in small-scale business. The GET Ahead training package differs from conventional business training materials by highlighting essential entrepreneurial skills from a gender perspective, whether applied to starting or improving an individual, family or group business. It addresses the practical and strategic needs of low-income women in enterprise by strengthening their basic business and people management skills. It shows women how to develop their personal entrepreneurial traits and obtain support through groups, networks and institutions dealing with enterprise development.

**Mekong Children's and Youth Forums on Human Trafficking** provided a venue for children and young people from the Greater Mekong Sub-region to collectively articulate their perspectives on the issue of trafficking. It was a collaborative effort between ILO-IPEC and its NGO partners to bring the voices and views of children into the anti-trafficking debate. The first forum was held in 2004 and then again in 2007 in which the name was later changed to Mekong Youth Forum on Human Trafficking since participants included children and youth. A series of national and provincial forums in the six GMS countries Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar (by Save the Children), Thailand and Viet Nam preceded the regional level forums. During these events, discussions were held with senior government officials and in each case a set of national recommendations was drafted and presented to the governments. In 2007, recommendations that resulted from the MYF were presented at the Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking (COMMIT) meeting held in Beijing, China. The MCF/MYF highlight the importance in regularly consulting children and young people on issues that affect them.

**Participatory Monitoring.** With the title *“Tools for Prevention - Participatory Monitoring: Guidelines for practitioners in the fight against human trafficking”* - This ‘tool’ takes the form of a publication, and offers advice on participatory monitoring with an emphasis on inclusive monitoring for impact rather than focusing on the activities themselves. Quite technical in nature, it lays out the way to undertake

this type of monitoring of interventions and gives feedback from those involved.

**Labour Migration Policy and Management Training** aims to strengthen rights-based management of labour migration in the context of the challenges it presents to policy makers and administrators in Asia. It provides an understanding of the dimensions of migration for employment in the region and problems and issues confronting migrants and national authorities in the countries they come from and go to. Participants also learn about the costs and benefits arising from labour migration and how it links with development processes. It raises decision-making issues typically encountered during the process of formulating policy or implementing it and provides comparative information, drawn from the experience of many countries, that should help to identify options, assessing trade-offs and making optimal choices.

**Empowerment for Children, Youth and Families: 3-R (Rights, Responsibilities and Representation) Training** aims to provide life and work skills to children, youth and adults in their home communities, and to migrants living and working in towns and cities in their own or other countries. The increased understanding and skills will allow them to make more informed decisions about their lives, seek viable work opportunities and increase their voice and representation in their families, communities and workplaces. The training kit is designed as an interactive tool for use in communities with children, youth and families, especially those at risk of child labour and trafficking of children and women for labour and sexual exploitation. It is an action-oriented tool for trainers and field workers to improve understanding about gender equality, rights, responsibilities and representation among children, youth and adults who face hardships in life. Additional information about these forums is also available at [www.mekongyouthforum.com](http://www.mekongyouthforum.com)

**Training on migrant recruitment practices and policies.** Following a multi-country research project in Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Thailand and Vietnam on the difference between formal and informal recruitment from the perspectives of governments, employers and



migrant workers, the TICW project conducted training courses across the sub-region, with central and provincial government officers from the ministry of labour and other relevant ministries, recruitment agencies and representatives of workers' organisations. The training course is action-oriented, as it identifies the ways in which to implement the Mekong Recommended Guidelines and the research recommendations in each country's domestic context.

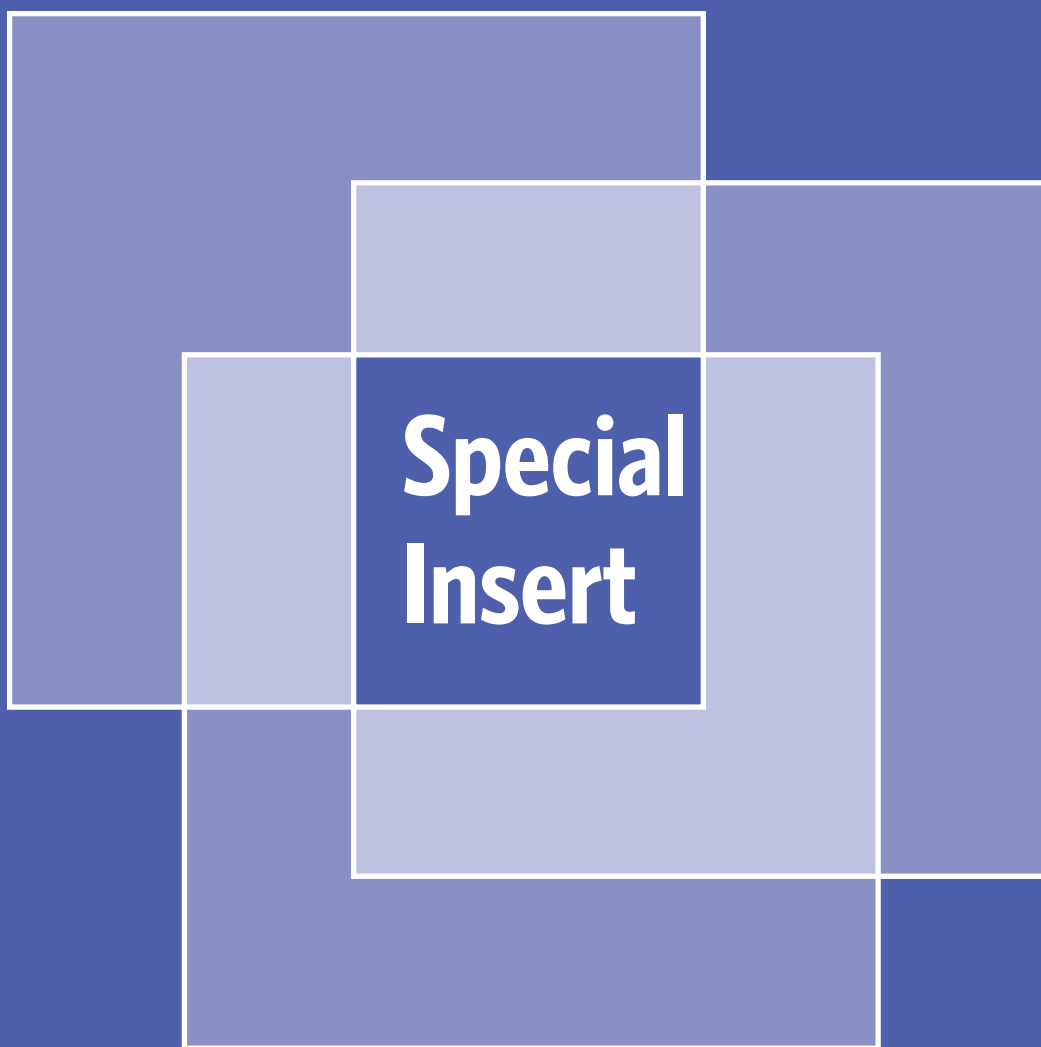
**A Participatory Training Manual: Thai Trade Unions and Organizing and Promoting the Rights of Migrant Workers.** The ILO has developed a training curriculum on organizing and promoting the rights of migrant workers in Thailand. Designed for representatives from trade unions, law societies, human rights bodies, the training course covers the nature and importance of the migration process, national and international migration laws and strategies to strengthen cooperation to promote migrant workers' rights and prevent human trafficking.

**Impact Assessment Toolkit.** Aiming to elaborate an impact assessment framework for the ILO TICW project, the toolkit identifies the correlation between the performance indicators established by the project and the areas of potential impact by making a logical link between the two. Beyond the ILO-IPEC, the toolkit is useful in clarify and understand the performance and ultimate impact of

many varied trafficking prevention interventions. The Toolkit and associated guidelines and criteria aid in evaluating programs in conjunction with the project's own performance indicators.

**Labour Dimensions of Human Trafficking, Understanding the Issue & Effective Responses: Lessons from the Greater Mekong Sub-Region of the ILO Mekong Project to Combat Trafficking in Children and Women (TICW)** is a week-long intensive certificate course that gathers ILO constituents, key stakeholders and academics dedicated in the fight against human trafficking. It aims to provide participants with an advanced understanding of trafficking for labour exploitation and to build capacity to ensure more effective responses in the Mekong-Sub-Region. More specifically, the objectives of the training course are to: clarify the conceptual framework and increase the understanding of migration and human trafficking; create a platform to share knowledge about international strategies and responses to address migration and human trafficking; prepare participants for their own development of strategies to address migration and trafficking of children for labour in the Greater Mekong Sub-Region. At the end of the course, participants will be able to identify gaps in current responses and develop plans for remedial action.

# The Countries and Selected Proven Practices







## MIGRATION AND TRAFFICKING – Cambodia (2000–2008)

Tiny Cambodia encompasses an amazing World Heritage Site and a recent history of extreme tragedy. It is also a country of rebounding resiliency, it entered the 21st century with rapid development and economic growth averaging 7.1 percent per annum (1994–2004). But it remains a country of unfortunate contrasts with its extensive rural poverty, fast-growing population, weak education and social support systems and a large informal labour market.

As a result of its tragic past, almost half of the 13 million population is younger than 18. With agriculture the single largest economic activity, three quarters of the population is vulnerable to irrigation problems, small harvests, low prices and natural disasters. Much of the population lives a hand-to-mouth existence, characterized by months of food insecurity. Many suffer from poor education, poor access to markets and a lack of ownership of production materials or land. Although many jobs have been created in agriculture, manufacturing, construction and tourism, an adequate supply of good jobs has not yet materialized. Therefore the quest for decent work for all, more employment opportunities for youth, and the development of ways to lift more people out of poverty, remain elusive.

Most people in rural areas, as well as the informal sector, are challenged to bring home adequate earnings. The factories of Phnom Penh and the fishing industry centred around Sihanouk Ville have encouraged extensive internal migration to these urban areas. But an insufficient level of opportunity has encouraged large flows of people out of the country too, mainly into Thailand in search of work. Many of these migrants are subject to exploitation in various forms, from unfair salaries and poor working conditions to restricted movements, forced labour or marriage or coerced involvement in prostitution.

Cambodia's rich cultural heritage has attracted rising numbers of foreign tourists over the past ten years: In 2007, 2 million international visitors trundled in at a 19 percent increase over 2006. Domestic "tourism" doubles the international figure – reflecting the movement of people within



Map courtesy of UNLAP

the country. The heavy influx has turned tourism into one of the country's fastest-growing industries. Given the disparity of economic development in Cambodia, the tourism areas also attract many of the country's poor adults and children looking to earn money as well as female migrants from Viet Nam. Lacking in skills and education, they are easily exploited, partly by a lingering problem with "sex tourists" and paedophiles – both foreign and domestic. While many internal migrants find profitability in the tourism sector, others can be taken advantage of by employers in the service sector that are spoiled for choice by the increasing supply of naïve arrivals searching for work.

## THE CAMBODIA-ILO PARTNERSHIP TO FIGHT LABOUR EXPLOITATION

The ILO's Mekong Sub-regional Project to Combat Trafficking in Children and Women (ILO-TICW) initiated its drive to develop partners in government as well as employers' and workers' organizations in Cambodia in 2000 by first developing provincial models of prevention.

Due to the heavy NGO presence in the country, there had been a lot of work previously to counter child labour and child prostitution. When the ILO-TICW project began, the Government's interest was limited to sexual exploitation. Midway, its interests broadened with an increased

emphasis on internal movements and labour exploitation, as well as cross-border flows into Thailand and the migrant situation there.

The first phase covered sending areas with a programme that coupled microfinance interventions (micro business loans, rice banks, cow banks), livelihood skills training and non-formal education with awareness raising among populations at risk in four targeted areas. In Phase II, the Government sought assistance on promoting safer migration and made a concerted effort to focus on the one sector where exploitation and its potential are rife.

## WHAT WORKED WELL

### 1. Child-safe tourism.

This innovative, comprehensive and far-reaching initiative had clear messages and tightly focused outreach in the tourism sector through a unique collaboration of ministries and the private sector. It included networking from the central, provincial/municipal, district and local levels, capacity building, workplace monitoring, awareness raising (of employers/managers and workers in hotels, guesthouses and restaurants, travel agents and tourists and university tourism courses), skills training and social services to targeted groups (counselling, training in negotiation with employers, referral services and alternative employment options through skills training).

The Ministry of Tourism developed a strategic plan to promote child-safe tourism that entailed research, policy development, law reform, prevention and protection for young people in tourism establishments. Operational guidelines supplemented the strategic plan and covered labour protection (monitoring labour law adherence in workplaces), tourism regulation (monitoring adherence to tourism regulations) and social protection. A training manual was developed and used in workshops to sensitize employers, government officials and workers on labour laws and labour exploitation, sexual exploitation, child rights, child-safe tourism, social services and social interventions as well as

negotiation skills. The outreach to hotels, guesthouses and restaurants also included creating a workplace network with 100 employers and 100 worker representatives as members who meet to discuss ways to prevent human trafficking, identify children and young women at risk of being trafficked and inform the relevant commission or committee of emergency cases, suspected cases of trafficking and employment needs and required skills. A team of trained employees monitor the communities.

### 2. Provincial planning.

This coordinating of actions with networks and the child protection committees it created from central to village levels strengthened the multisector responses and was ultimately integrated into the National Poverty Reduction Strategy. Seeking support and agreement from senior officials (such as the heads of ministries, departments and NGOs) early in the project encouraged participation from their juniors and helped to secure the committed leadership of the vice governor, which opened many doors. Participatory planning and training around trafficking issues and project concepts created a common understanding and confidence in tackling the problem; NGO partners provided training to local commune councils and village chiefs on collecting local data. Those involved reported that the training taught them new skills and, as a result of collecting local data, they got to know people in their village much better. Regular meetings built trust and increased cooperation.

### 3. Working in sending/transit provinces.

The focus on rural skills training in families where there is a risk of ill-prepared migration of a young person helped improve incomes and keep children in school and at home. The training covered small business management, a wide variety of skills in agriculture and animal husbandry and other livelihoods, followed by technical and financial assistance (through micro loans) to each person completing the courses. An innovative component of developing self-help groups, consisting mostly of individuals who have graduated from the rural skills training, provided mutual support and assistance in managing a livelihood and a loan and developing a “savings culture”.



## 4. Involving Children.

As part of the awareness campaign, more than 100 children and youth came together in 2004 and 2007 to talk about trafficking in Cambodia and make recommendations to the Government on improving trafficking prevention measures. Through preparation for the regional Mekong Youth Forum in Bangkok, the participating children learned to articulate their opinions and to work as leaders in their communities on the issues of trafficking and child labour. Central to this campaign (designed in collaboration with Save the Children) was the development of the concept of regular consultation of grassroots communities in policy-level formulation relating to trafficking – something the Government formally committed itself to in a joint declaration with the other five Greater Mekong Sub-region governments at a counter-trafficking meeting in Beijing in December 2007.

## 5. Awareness raising through mass media.

A collaboration with the BBC World Service Trust, which produced a popular soap opera, *Taste of Life*, with storylines aimed at specific health prevention issues, led to the inclusion of trafficking messages. This format used a ready-made mass audience of young people in the targeted age groups and rural storylines based on real stories and local actors to influence the audience. A feature film, *In the Dark*, was released using many of the scenes from the original episodes combined with nearly 30 minutes of fresh drama and shown for free in cinemas. It was later released on television. A baseline survey was conducted at the start of the collaboration; each trafficking/migration episode was tested with a sample audience first and followed up with awareness surveying to achieve qualitative findings on the impact. A multimedia package complemented the TV programming with TV and radio public service spots with trafficking awareness messages and 200 radio phone-in programmes on a popular station, as well as a comic book, called *Popular Magazine*, that portrayed the telenovella storyline and reiterated the key messages. The *Popular Magazine* was distributed throughout the country, including to school libraries.

## 6. Promoting safe migration.

The advocacy work to reduce unsafe or risky migration from the sending sources to receiving areas and across borders led to ground-breaking bilateral agreements and strengthened institutions, policies, laws and mechanisms to detect and stop labour exploitation and trafficking. Technical support to the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training and other officials helped them better understand about migration and its links to trafficking, better collaborate and share information. Awareness raising included distribution of a Cambodian-language *Travel Smart – Work Smart* guidebook for Cambodian migrants in Thailand or heading there with useful information on labour laws and policies in Thailand, workers' rights and where to go for help. A second edition in Khmer was published in Thailand. Another *Travel Smart – Work Smart* guidebook in Khmer aimed at potential migrants inside Cambodia's rural sending areas was produced in mid 2008.

## TIMELINE CAMBODIA

- 1995 The Cambodian National Council for Children is created, with four subcommittees: 1) on trafficking and sexual exploitation of children; 2) on child labour and other forms of exploitation; 3) on childhood; and 4) on legislating child-related laws.
- 1993 Cambodia ratifies the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and is referred to in the country's Constitution.
- 1999 The Government ratifies ILO Convention No. 138 on the minimum age for employment.
- 2001 The Ministry of Tourism establishes a Child-Safe Tourism Commission, chaired by the Secretary of State with the heads of relevant departments as members.
- 2002 The Anti-Human Trafficking and Juvenile Protection Department is created to address trafficking and sexual exploitation of women and children, with police units in seven provinces though its efforts are hindered by inadequate resources, insufficient staff and lack of training.



The Ministry of Tourism drafts a Law on Tourism Administration (still waiting final approval from the Council of Ministers) that prohibits employment of anyone younger than 18 years.

- 2003 Ministry officials participate in the Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative Against Trafficking (COMMIT) with five other sub-regional governments to continue cross-border cooperation and coordination in fighting human trafficking, recognizing that it results in both labour and sexual exploitation.

The Government signs an MOU with the Thai Government on cooperation to fight trafficking and assist victims and a second MOU on cooperation on employment of workers.

- 2005 The Government ratifies ILO Convention No. 182 on the elimination of the worst forms of child labour, making it obligated to address labour exploitation and trafficking. It becomes the first country in the GMS to have ratified all eight ILO 'Core' Conventions.

The Government signs an MOU with Viet Nam on cooperation to assist children and young women who have been trafficked.

- 2006 The Government approves a changed timeframe for the Second National Plan of Action on Trafficking Persons and Sexual Exploitation (2006–2010), considered landmark in recognizing the country as a source, transit and destination for trafficking and provides for children's/young people's input on policy and programming decisions, a clear strategy on prevention and refers to both labour and sexual exploitation.

The Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training issues ministry order for safer migration and labour rights to migrant workers.

- 2007 The National Assembly approves the Law on the Suppression of the Kidnapping and Trafficking of Human Persons and Exploitation of Human Persons, strengthening the 1996 law that criminalized debt bondage, slavery and forced child labour.

Employment recruitment agencies form an Association of Cambodian Recruitment Agencies.

The Government launches the country's first national task force to combat human trafficking; it coordinates more than 200 organizations working on trafficking and labour exploitation.

- 2008 The National Assembly approves and the King signs the Law on the Suppression of Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation.

The Government approves a National Plan of Action on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (2008–2012).

## Cambodia - Facts and Figures

### Socio-economic Overview

#### Demography:

- Total population: 13.3 million
- Urban 17%; Rural 83%
- Population under age 20: 56% (1998)

#### Education:

- Literacy rates age: 80% (M) 58% (F)
- Primary enrolment: 96% (M); 91% (F)
- Secondary enrolment: 30% (M) 19% (F)

#### Economy:

- GDP/Capita: \$ 1,446
- Population below national poverty line: 40% (rural), (14% (urban)

#### Unemployment (2000):

2.5%

Source: UNDP (2002), World Bank, CIA Government Publications, UNESCAP Statistical Yearbook 2004, UNESCO (UIS) 2002-03

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[www.childtrafficking.net](http://www.childtrafficking.net)

## MIGRATION AND TRAFFICKING – China, Yunnan Province (2000–2008)

Over the past three decades, China's economic reforms have had enormous impact both at home and abroad: In 2004, China alone accounted for more than 20 per cent of the increase in world trade.<sup>i</sup> The development of non-state enterprises and special economic zones in the 1980s triggered the largest rural-urban migration in history as surplus labour from the countryside moved to jobs in towns and cities. Figures vary, but government statistics put the number of internal migrants at anywhere between 100 million and 120 million; unofficial figures go as high as 150 million.<sup>ii</sup>

While there has been spectacular economic growth, an average of more than nine per cent annually, the market economy has been maturing at a much slower pace, and the divide between the rich and poor of China's one-billion-plus population remains a concern to the Government.

In the past ten years, there has been a substantial increase in cross-border migration between Yunnan province and its neighbouring countries. Compared with eastern and central provinces, Yunnan in the south-west of China, has a relatively underdeveloped economy and is the most impoverished of all the provinces. In recent years, the Provincial Government began implementing policies to address the poverty situation, including interventions relating to the labour migration of rural surplus labourers. Between 2000 and 2005, the number of people living in poverty in Yunnan decreased by roughly one-in-four (10 million to 7.3 million people).

Migrants tend to find work in Yunnan's service sectors (the province attracts many tourists) as well as in its tobacco, machinery, chemical, agricultural product and mining industries. Working children are considered rare due to intense competition for employment among adult labourers and the necessity of an identity card for recruitment, which is unavailable to rural children.

Illiteracy rates in far and bordering mountainous areas of Yunnan are higher than the provincial and



national averages, and some counties have a large number of school drop-outs. Conditions for agriculture vary and farmers tend to lack advanced skills, resulting in low productivity and poor marketing knowledge. All these factors contribute to the increasing numbers of young people who seek to migrate for employment to help the family situation. Poorly educated, poorly prepared and eager to earn money, many have faced trafficking-related sexual and labour exploitation during their movements and their intended destinations.

## THE YUNNAN, CHINA – ILO PARTNERSHIP TO FIGHT LABOUR EXPLOITATION

In 2000, the ILO's Mekong Sub-regional Project to Combat Trafficking in Children and Women (ILO-TICW) initiated its drive to develop trafficking-prevention partnerships with Government as well as employers' and workers' organizations in Yunnan province. ILO-TICW teamed up with the Yunnan Provincial Women's Federation (with the backing of the All-China Women's Federation) at the suggestion of the central public security ministry officials who advised that this partnership would offer the best fit. The Women's Federation had the best advantage for prevention efforts as the government agency with the most extensive network of members and exerted considerable influence from the ground up.

<sup>i</sup> Hu, Vicky, "The Chinese Economic Reform and Chinese Entrepreneurship", in *X Jornada d'Economia* of the caixaManresa l'esperit emprenedor, May 2005 [www.uoc.edu/symposia/caixamanresa/jornadaeconomia/2005/eng/vicky\\_hu.pdf](http://www.uoc.edu/symposia/caixamanresa/jornadaeconomia/2005/eng/vicky_hu.pdf)

<sup>ii</sup> [www.ihlo.org/LRC/G/000105.html](http://www.ihlo.org/LRC/G/000105.html)

After an orientation on the different dimensions of trafficking and the ILO-TICW project's strategy, the Women's Federation created a wide-ranging coordinated response by involving 11 different agencies in its Provincial Steering Committee and then similar committees on the prefecture, county and village levels. Because trafficking was largely known as the abduction of women for forced marriages and baby boys for adoption and considered the responsibility of public security, officials in the various bureaus – agriculture, education, finance, etc. – thought it “strange” at first to be included. However, in the years that followed considerable efforts were made, successfully, to change perceptions of “human trafficking” both in Yunnan and right across China.

Phase I developed an integrated “call to action” with activities designed to improve government officials’ and villagers’ understanding of trafficking and migration and its risks, human and labour rights abuses, and what could be done to counter them. This included a comprehensive package of direct assistance on farming techniques, microfinance and education subsidies in 12 villages of two counties where cross-border trafficking was most prevalent.

When the second phase shifted emphasis in 2004 to destination areas, the Kunming Railway Bureau and Yunnan Provincial Statistics Bureau joined the partnership. The direct assistance activities continued, targeting at-risk young women and families in four counties. But the major change was the inclusion of Kunming City as a receiving centre for migrants. This paradigm shift to destination areas included inclusive activities on educating employers on decent work practices while making a “business case” for their active participation in preventing labour exploitation.

## WHAT WORKED WELL

### 1. Reaching women migrants and would-be migrants.

The project used an existing and popular concept of the Women's Federation found throughout China known as Women's Homes and adapted them to be a place where young women could find mutual support. The Women's Homes provided a central venue for employment information, awareness on trafficking tricks, legal literacy and self-protection,

information about human and labour rights, places to receive skills training, including pre-departure life skills (e.g. at Women's Homes in rural areas). Since they were set up in both sending and receiving areas these Women's Homes provided an easy way to reach would-be migrants and women who had already migrated. In Phase I, 53 centres were set up; in the second phase, 12 centres were added in Kunming City in areas where most migrant women lived or worked. In promoting the project's experience, the Wuhua District Government of Kunming City funded the set-up of another 72 “homes”. In the city, the homes became a refuge for migrants who used irregular channels and thus typically didn't have legal employment information or know where to go for help. In villages, the homes encouraged women with little opportunity for collective activities to share experiences and let others learn from that. Along with useful labour and employment information, the cultural entertainment helped nurture a community bond.

### 2. Keeping ethnic girls in school.

Girls from these rural areas were identified as especially vulnerable to human trafficking, often because they were more likely to drop out of school and consider leaving the family home to work. Scholarships helped their families with the education burden thus delaying their departure from school; innovative participatory learning methods were introduced that helped coursework better relate to community realities; cascade trainings and children-to-children and children-to-community advocacy improved the communication of messages and skills; and working intensely with families and community members educated them about trafficking and encouraged their support in stopping it. The project confronted the identified educational deficiencies of access, quality, relevance, cultural sensitivity and skills training that surfaced from monitoring and evaluation processes. An innovative ILO programme called SCREAM – Supporting Children's Rights Through Education, the Arts and the Media – was introduced to teachers. SCREAM involves new socially, economically and culturally appropriate interactive modules that use participatory methods and focus on topics neglected in the standard curriculum. The method makes education more relevant to ethnic minority girls, easy to grasp and culturally sensitive. With the emphasis on trafficking risks, general life skills, vocational

training and gender equity the programme was a success that was replicated. By working with at-risk families and improving teaching standards, several hundred girls vulnerable to trafficking returned to school or re-enrolled.

### 3. Increasing farmers' incomes.

The activity “packaged” prevention by providing agriculture skills, marketing training and revolving fund loans, along with awareness on migration risks and trafficking and gender equality issues, to improve productivity, family income and living conditions. It began with the sensitizing of key officials and extension workers in the agriculture department to win their support and resource approval. Then extension workers evaluated the local markets to identify opportunity for further crop/product development. The agriculture bureaus asked experienced experts to edit training materials to make them more practical, effective and user-friendly (using vivid multi-media and brochures in local languages). A sample of households was selected to receive revolving funds for agricultural development and to demonstrate the new techniques. Once the farmers started planting or running a small business, various specialists (usually the agriculture extension workers) followed up with them to help with any arising problems and to document their results to show the impact on trafficking prevention. The activity also included working with the media to inform the public of the importance of trafficking prevention. The agricultural skills trainings led to an increase in household income – as well as productivity and yields and helped parents keep their children – especially girls – in school. The project also built a mutual-support network of farmers to pass on training skills to neighbouring villagers.

### 4. Involving children

As part of the awareness campaign, 80 children came together in 2003 and 2004 to talk about trafficking in China and make recommendations to the Government on improving trafficking prevention measures. Through preparation for the regional Mekong Youth Forum in Bangkok, the participating children learned to articulate their opinions and to work as leaders in their communities on the issues of trafficking and child labour. Central to this campaign (designed in collaboration with Save the Children) was the development of the

concept of regular consultation of grassroots communities in policy-level formulation relating to trafficking – something the Government formally committed itself to in a joint declaration with the other five Mekong sub-region governments at a counter-trafficking meeting in Beijing in December 2007.

### 5. Self-monitoring among employers.

More than 800 employers in Kunming City participated in workshops on the definitions of trafficking and labour exploitation and legal rights/obligations of workers and employers. They then wrote and distributed a code of conduct – by employers for employers – to prevent trafficking in their businesses.

### 6. Provincial anti-trafficking policy/work plan.


In 2005, the *Recommendations to Improve the Work to Prevent and Combat Trafficking Crime in Children and Women* was drafted and finalized (as a work plan for mainstreaming and sustaining anti-trafficking efforts) by a team of experts in consultation with officials in the provincial Public Security Bureau, Justice Bureau, Comprehensive Management Office and Women's Federation. The Provincial Social Comprehensive Management Office then issued the work plan as provincial policy for all relevant departments to follow; the plan stresses the government's roles in preventing and combating trafficking and necessary local financial input.

### 7. A communication network.

Involving the Women's Federations, Labour Inspection Departments, trade unions of Guangdong and Yunnan provinces as well as various Yunnan government offices in Guangdong and Shenzhen, a network was established that helped these roles work more cohesively in implementing the safe employment and labour insurance policies for female migrant workers and further rights protection work. Referring to experiences of female migrant workers and experts from the Labour Rights Protection Department, the ILO-TICW's *Travel Smart – Work Smart* guidebook was adapted to provide young women migrants or potential migrants with safe labour-migration knowledge and information on where to go for rights protection and employment services in Guangdong and Yunnan.



## TIMELINE CHINA

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- 1973 The Chinese Government ratifies ILO Convention (No. 138) on minimum age for employment.
- 1978 China opens up to international trade and begin major economic reforms to shift the centrally planned economy to market-based capitalism.
- 1979 The Government ratifies the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).
- 1992 The 1992 Law Safeguarding Women's Rights and Interests criminalizes the abduction and trafficking of women and provides for the rescue and rehabilitation of victims.
- 1997 Trafficking in persons is made a crime under the Criminal Law.
- 1999 The Government ratifies ILO Convention No. 138 on the minimum age for employment.
- 2001 China joins the World Trade Organization, dependent upon raising labour practices to international standards.
- The Yunnan Women's Development Plan and Yunnan Children's Development Plan (2001-2010) covers equal employment, poverty alleviation, protection of nine-year compulsory education, prevention and control of sexual infections and protection of legal and human rights as well as banning child labour and punishing of crimes of child trafficking.
- 2002 The Government approves the Regulation on Prohibiting Child Labour.
- The Government ratifies ILO Convention No. 182 on the elimination of the worst forms of child labour. Chinese officials meet with Vietnamese government officials to discuss a joint strategy to overcome cross-border trafficking.
- 2003 Ministry officials participate in the Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative Against Trafficking (COMMIT) with five other sub-regional governments to continue cross-border cooperation and coordination in fighting human trafficking, recognizing that it results in both labour and sexual exploitation.

The Government develops a national plan of action against trafficking in women and children (2005-2010).

- 2004 The Yunnan provincial ILO-TICW project is replicated as a national programme to prevent trafficking of women and children for labour exploitation.
- 2007 China and five other GMS countries sign a joint-declaration to coordinate efforts to combat trafficking in the Mekong sub-region (COMMIT IMM2). The Chinese Government follows in December of that year with a national plan action on trafficking, for 2008–2012 that covers prevention, enforcement and assistance to rescued women and children.

## CHINA (Yunnan Province) Facts and Figures

### Socio-economic Overview

#### Demography:

- Total population: 43.3 million
- Male: 22.406 million
- Female: 20.925 million
- Ethnic groups: 25 minorities totaling 14.5 million
- Below 20 (n/a) below 15: 26%

#### Education (2000):

- Adult literacy rates: 85%
- Primary school enrolment: 99.6% (m-f parity)
- Secondary school (jnr): 87.5%  
Male: 89%; Female: 86%

#### Economy (2002):

- Per capita GDP: USD627
- Rural per capita income: USD195
- Those living below the national poverty line: 33% (rural figures only avail)\*

#### Unemployment rate:

4% (only urban avail)

Source: Yunnan Provincial Statistics Bureau, census 2000\*  
(this calculation is made from the following rural figures:  
Absolute poverty in population: 2.86 million and Low  
income population: 7.64 million)

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## MIGRATION AND TRAFFICKING – Lao PDR (2000–2008)

Having inherited a war-torn and extremely underdeveloped economy in 1975, the revolutionary Government has inherited challenging times as it works to improve the well-being of its 5.9 million inhabitants. Since the late 1980s, the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic has created economic policies to move the former kingdom from a centrally planned economy to that of a liberalized, market-oriented system. Although a commercial banking system was introduced, it did not spread beyond the major urban centres, leaving rural populations with no such services. Domestic and (limited) foreign investors were given a major role in economic development. Albeit small, construction and manufacturing sectors experienced growth with the reforms. Economic growth currently stands at around 6–8 percent.

But there has not been enough opportunity to ensure economic security or feed the large number of young workers (more than half of the population is younger than 20). Agriculture dominates the Lao economy, and yet it remains vulnerable to natural conditions, such as drought and floods. The Government has promoted industrial and service sectors, particularly the garment industry and tourism, and the development of hydropower for export.

Although migration takes place within Lao PDR (the Government released the reins on the internal movement of people in 1994<sup>i</sup>), the biggest cause for concern is the increasing cross-border movement of Lao citizens, particularly to its considerably more prosperous neighbour Thailand. Thai authorities estimated in 2004 that 181,614 undocumented Laotians were working in Thailand (including more 100,000 women/girls).<sup>ii</sup> An ILO-supported survey by the Government of Lao PDR found that more than 20 percent of all Lao migrants



from three major sending provinces typically are younger than 18. More than two thirds of them are girls who are vulnerable to sexual exploitation, forced labour and exploitative domestic labour.<sup>iii</sup> Many Lao men have been trafficked into Thailand's factories and fishing industry.

There is an especially large number of working children in Lao PDR and many cross the border to work illegally in Thailand. Evidence of abuse among those who return has not appeared to prevent continuous or indeed repeated cross-border migration.

## THE LAO PDR – ILO PARTNERSHIP TO FIGHT LABOUR EXPLOITATION

The ILO's Mekong Sub-regional Project to Combat Trafficking in Children and Women (TICW) initiated its drive to develop prevention partners in government in Lao PDR in 2000, when "human trafficking" was quite a new term to most authorities there. As the Government's first anti-trafficking project, much of the first

<sup>i</sup> Samrane, 2000 in *Situational Analysis of Human Trafficking in the Lao PDR, With emphasis on Savannakhet*, A literature based study undertaken for World Vision Lao PDR, by James Haughton

<sup>ii</sup> Information the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare received from Thai authorities

<sup>iii</sup> The Mekong Challenge: Winding Roads – Young migrants from Lao PDR and their vulnerability to human trafficking. ILO-TICW 2007

phase of the project concentrated on building skills and a good understanding of what needed to be done.

Through trainings and bringing officials together to discuss migration issues in the region, a gradual understanding of the realities of modern-day Lao PDR revealed the massive numbers of predominantly young people who leave home each year in search of opportunities across the border.

Government officials responded by looking for ways to promote safer migration and by joining sub-regional efforts, such as the Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking (COMMIT). They also sought out ILO-TICW technical advice on better managing migration, including developing a bilateral agreement with the Thai Government to accept Lao workers. The Government's current poverty reduction strategy includes references to combating trafficking, both cross-border and internal.

As a result, some communities targeted in the TICW project have made a complete “turn around”: Communities from where there were previously high levels of trafficking have now reduced this to practically nothing. A microfinance component has become an inspiring intervention model. Originally implemented in Borikhamxai, Champassack, Khammuane, Savannakhet and Sayabouly provinces, it is planned for replication throughout the country – and has become a model for other countries to consider.

## WHAT WORKED WELL

### 1. Microfinancing.

After the initial faltering of the revolving loan fund approach due to poor management and insufficient villager investment, the Lao Sustainable Community Development Promotion Association, a national non-profit organization, and an ILO microfinance specialist, initiated the innovative Village Development Fund (VDF). The success of this

approached largely banked on the requisite that members had to maintain a certain amount of savings for at least three months prior to receiving the right to borrow from the village bank; thus the villagers had an invested contribution to the bank's success. There also was increased training of the village committee members managing the village bank.

The committee managing the village bank had to consist of both men and women. The poorest villagers and women and men all had equal access to the savings and credit schemes. Awareness raising on labour exploitation, trafficking, human rights and gender issues were well integrated into the trainings and lending practices. The VDF approach displaced village loan sharks and their high-interest loans and instilled a culture of savings and planning. The community-based accounting, community-determined interest and dividend scheme and the targeting of populations vulnerable to trafficking brought a new standard to community microfinance. The complementing provision of vocational skills and business management training as well as *Training of Entrepreneurs* for interested women through cooperation with SEED-WEDGE (the Small Enterprise Development – Women Entrepreneur Development and Gender Equality project) offered a balanced solution to risky migration. The VDF initiative resulted in the establishment of the scheme in 120 villages – 96 of them in project villages and the other 24 in other villages that replicated the idea without project support. Total current savings has gone beyond US\$1 million.

### 2. Institutionalizing awareness raising.

Engaging the Lao Women's Union, which has wide-ranging reach and authority, with advocacy tools and a deep understanding of human trafficking enabled its members to more concretely pass on vital protective knowledge to vulnerable groups as well as mainstream trafficking strategies within their regular duties. “Awareness-raising” teams of the union members and government officials at the

national, provincial and district levels were sensitized on trafficking-related issues, including national laws and regulations (particularly on immigration, employment and human trafficking) and relevant United Nations/ILO Conventions newly ratified by the Government, and trained on how to effectively disseminate vital information, including communication skills. The teams were then mandated to spread protective information and messages within communities and the government agencies they represent.

### 3. Institution Building.

Strengthening the role of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare to coordinate action to combat trafficking in children and women and child Labour was an early priority. Working with the Government, the Child Labour and Child Trafficking Office of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (CLCTO) was established and became a key focal point in the Government's coordinated efforts to counter trafficking both at source in Lao PDR and at a sub-regional level, with senior representation at the COMMIT level.

### 4. Involving children.

As part of the awareness campaign, more than 100 children came together in 2004 and 2007 to talk about trafficking in Lao PDR and make recommendations to the Government on improving trafficking prevention measures. Through preparation for the regional Mekong Youth Forum in Bangkok, the participating youth learned to articulate their opinions and to work as leaders in their own communities as advocates on the issues of counter-trafficking and child labour. Central to this campaign (designed in collaboration with Save the Children) was the development of the concept of regular consultation of grassroots communities in policy-level formulation relating to trafficking – something the Government formally committed itself to in a joint declaration with the other five Greater Mekong Sub-region governments at a counter-trafficking meeting in Beijing in December 2007.

### 5. Reaching migrants.

Information on the Government new regulations including the contents of a recent MOU on employment, human and workers' rights, ILO standards and other legal information as well as Thai labour laws and where to go for help were distributed through the *Travel Smart – Work Smart* guide through various partnering NGOs to Lao migrants in Thailand. Inside Lao PDR, this involved a separate guide to raise awareness of potential migrants that there were nine authorized recruitment agencies to use when they wanted to go abroad for work (including to Thailand). The ILO-TICW project also worked with Lao National Radio and other domestic media to help journalists understand the complexities of trafficking-related labour migration. In turn, their reports reached tens of thousands of potential migrants on ways to stay safe when travelling abroad for work.

### TIMELINE LAO PDR

- 1986 The Government introduces the “New Economic Mechanism” to liberalize the centrally planned economy toward market-based capitalism.
- 1991 The country's first is written and accepted. Then a National Assembly (meeting now twice a year) was created to approve laws.
- 2001 The Party and Government launched a policy ambition to lift the country out of its “least-developed country” status by 2020  
The Government signs the Regional Commitment and Action Plan of the East Asia and Pacific Region Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and the Bangkok Declaration on Irregular Migration.
- 2002 A memorandum of understanding between Lao PDR and Thailand on labour cooperation was signed Thailand signed a memorandum of understanding with Lao PDR (and Cambodia and



Myanmar) in 2002 that permitted the pre-migration registration of migrants and a regular migration scheme, with increased freedom for migrant workers. The new registration scheme began in 2004. Approximately 180,000 Laotians registered.

2003 Ministry officials participate in the Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative Against Trafficking (COMMIT) with five other sub-regional governments to continue cross-border cooperation and coordination in fighting human trafficking, recognizing that it results in both labour and sexual exploitation.

2004 Law on Development in Women addresses trafficking and domestic violence with provision for victim assistance and punishes traffickers.

2005 The Government ratifies ILO Convention No. 182 on the elimination of the worst forms of child labour, making it obligated to address labour exploitation and trafficking and ILO Convention No. 138 on the minimum age for employment.

The Government signs MOU with Thailand on cooperation to combat trafficking in persons, especially women and children and a second one on employment cooperation.

2006 The Government drafted a National Plan of Action to Combat Human Trafficking.

The Government revises article 134 of its Penal Code to cover trafficking of men, women and children and prosecution of traffickers and fully adopts the UN trafficking definition.

The National Assembly endorses the National Law on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Children, protecting them from abuse and exploitation.

The Government hosts a meeting of the Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative Against Trafficking and also

organizes its first national workshop on anti-trafficking.

Law on the Protection of Children and other provisions of the Lao criminal code criminalizes most forms of trafficking for labour and sexual exploitation; penalties are similar with those for rape.

2007 Lao PDR and five other GMS countries sign a joint-declaration to coordinate efforts to combat trafficking in the Mekong sub-region (COMMIT IMM2).

The Government finalizes its first National Plan of Action Against Trafficking in Persons (2007–2012) that clearly deals with both labour and sexual exploitation and refers to domestic trafficking.

## LAO PDR - Facts and Figures

### Socio-economic Overview

#### Demography:

- Total population: 5,900,000
- 20% Urban, 80%; Rural
- Population under age 20: 54%

#### Education:

- Adult literacy rates: 77% (M) 61% (F)
- Primary enrolment: 88% (M); 82% (F)
- Secondary enrolment: 38% (M) 32% (F)
- Total enrolment: 1,200,000

#### Economy:

- Total GDP/Capita: \$390 USD
- Pop. living below the national poverty line: 27% (U) 41%

#### Unemployment:

n/a

Sources: National Statistic Centre, Yearbook 2001; Min. of Education, Yearbook 2001, World Bank 2005, UNFPA 2005, UNDP 2003, CIA World Factbook 2006, UNESCO (UIS) 2002-03, UNESCAP Statistical Yearbook 2004

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## MIGRATION AND TRAFFICKING – Thailand (2000–2008)

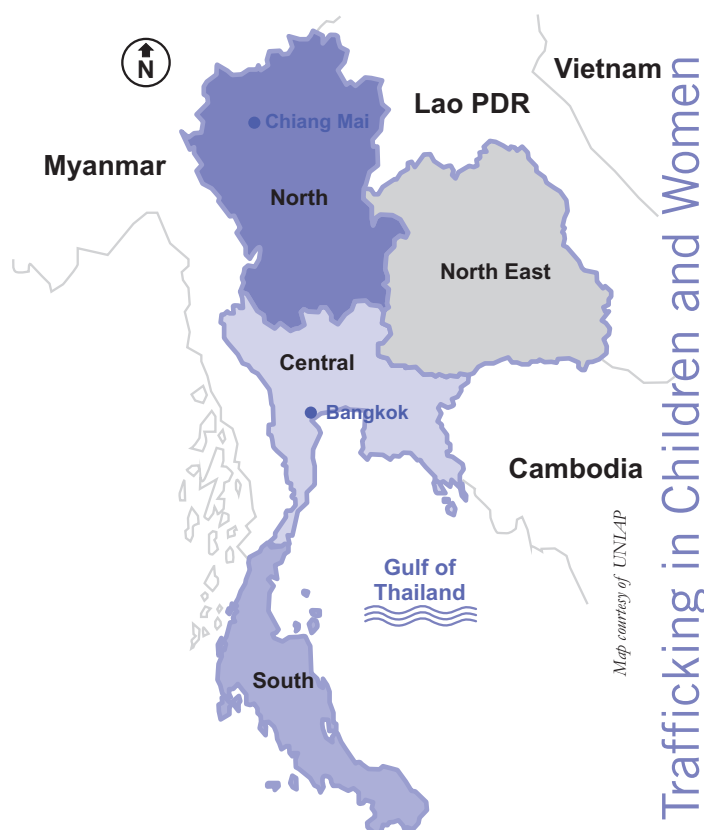
After decades in the shadows of some regional neighbours, Thailand leapt into “tiger” status with quite rapid economic growth in the 1980s and early-to-mid 1990s. The construction and industrial booms pulled large segments of the population to urban centres, many of them on a seasonal basis but many also permanently relocating away from the countryside.

As the economy recovered after the jolt of the Asian financial crisis that began in 1997, there emerged a new Thailand with more young people remaining in schools for longer and more people less interested in many jobs regarded as unseemly or low paid. Suddenly there was a need for foreign migrant workers willing to accept conditions unacceptable to Thais. As development lagged in neighbouring countries, adult and child migrants flowed into Thailand hoping for decent opportunities in manufacturing, garments, fishing, aquaculture, construction, entertainment and households as domestic workers. However, for many young migrants this meant working without the protection of existing labour laws – and for those working without proper documents, the constant fear of harassment, exploitation, arrest and deportation.

At the same time, and despite the prosperity, the country has experienced continued economic stagnation in some parts of the country – particularly the North and the populous but rural Northeast. From those areas there continues a steady flow of young people seeking opportunities elsewhere – in Thailand and beyond.

Although diminishing due to socio-economic improvements and prevention programmes, internal trafficking from Thailand’s North and Northeast to urban and tourist areas for labour and sexual exploitation is still significant. Ethnic communities (mainly hill tribe minorities) in the North remain particularly vulnerable.

An out-dated law to combat trafficking for sexual exploitation of children and women was replaced in June 2008 with a new Act of Parliament that also recognized the trafficking of men and, significantly, that trafficking could also take place for labour exploitation. Minimum penalties for those convicted – including exploitative employers – involved a mandatory custodial sentence. Fines could also be applied in addition to the prison time and if



Government officials were found guilty they would face twice or even three times the minimum sentences.

## THE THAILAND – ILO PARTNERSHIP TO FIGHT LABOUR EXPLOITATION

The ILO’s Mekong Sub-regional Project to Prevent Trafficking in Children and Women (TICW) initiated its drive to develop prevention partners in government as well as employers’ and workers’ organizations entered an environment in Thailand in 2000. The Government has had a long history of national plans of action, especially on the commercial exploitation of children; many programmes were in place, much of which concentrated on the rescue and return of trafficking victims.

Despite initial resistance to a new emphasis on migrants and more specifically the labour exploitation many were facing, the Government agreed to work with the Project to help prevent abuses. As a result, Thailand now has operational guidelines within relevant ministries, the police and social workers working together to deal with victims of labour and sexual exploitation. Thailand initiated

memoranda of understanding within several provinces and also with three neighbouring countries, from where most of the hundreds of thousands of migrants in Thailand originate. The Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Social Development and Human Security have worked together to ensure the new anti-trafficking law protects against labour exploitation and responds to abuses.

Government reluctance to accept financial support from an outside organization encouraged the TICW project to take its funding assistance to NGOs wanting to work on trafficking prevention and protection models in the countryside. ILO-TICW attention focused on sending areas in rural communities in several Northern provinces before moving to urban centres like the greater Bangkok area with an emphasis on labour exploitation and safe migration. The neighbouring Province of Samut Sakhon, one of the seafood processing hubs of Southeast Asia – and home to hundreds of thousands of migrants from neighbouring Myanmar – was also given priority consideration and funding to an NGO working there, as well to a group dedicated to helping Burmese migrant workers avoid labour abuses.



## WHAT WORKED WELL

### 1. Stakeholders.

Involving government officials directly in consultation of the project design and in formulating research with accredited Thai academic institutions, especially when undertaking sensitive research, helped to avoid accusations often experienced in the past that ‘foreigners’ were pointing fingers of blame at internal problems. Having two strong and influential local champions who strongly backed the national campaign on trafficking gave the project’s strategy immense push and credibility.

### 2. Progressive bilateral and provincial agreements.

The Thai Government sought help in forging ahead in a unique plan to make agreements with neighbouring countries on the protection and return of trafficking victims (a process initiated with support from the International Organization on Migration) and on creating safe passages for migrants into Thailand. A series of MOUs has been signed on cooperation for employment and fighting

trafficking with assistance to victims. To adapt the bilateral MOUs into a local context, governments in nine northern provinces where many victims of human trafficking originate adopted their own MOU on Common Guidelines of Practices for Agencies Concerned with Cases where Women and Children are Victims of Human Trafficking. That unusual agreement called for operational task forces on rescues and suppression of trafficking crime, pulling together representatives from government agencies and NGOs in a multidisciplinary team.

To simplify the legal text into more user-friendly information, a handbook of the MOUs was produced to clarify roles and responsibilities of each partner and a number of explanatory workshops was organized.

### 3. Groundbreaking research.

Mahidol University researchers conducted a pioneering study to identify in detail, the causes, conditions and patterns of both forced labour and trafficking of migrant children and young women at destination points in Thailand. The study centred on four labour sectors – fisheries and fish processing, manufacturing (small to medium-sized firms), domestic work and agriculture. The findings helped inform appropriate policy and programme interventions involving employers and workers organizations as well as government.

### 4. Hill-tribe community development.

The Mirror Art Group (a Thai Advocacy-based NGO) promoted eco tourism and homestay development and other livelihood training combined with study tours and awareness raising; a strong element of the activity involved encouraging youth activism among several hill tribe communities by training 23 youths in five villages to be community “watchdog” volunteers. As well they initiated an eco-tourist home stay enterprise to generate alternative forms of income to migration.

### 5. Indexing at-risk persons.

One of the agencies created in the nine-province MOU, the Chiang Mai Coordination Centre for the Protection of Children’s and Women’s Rights (under the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security), collaborated with a consultant team from nearby Chiang Mai University to design a computer program to create a human trafficking – a vulnerability – database. In the process, they created a “risk index” that points to persons highly vulnerable to human trafficking. That same program

also pinpoints destination sites where people have ended up in exploitative establishments. The database was designed to be standardized so that it could take information of relevance from many different sources and be used by partnering agencies and organizations throughout a province and nationally.

### 6. Nurturing employers as monitors.

The Chiang Mai Coordination Centre planned to go after business owners and entrepreneurs who violate labour laws. But in preparing their approach, the staff recognized that they could also nurture reputable employers and entrepreneurs as allies in efforts to combat the problem. Having established a working relationship, the Coordination Centre staff then asked these employers to help collect data on the demands for labour, conditions of work and living conditions (where they existed) within the work place as well as information on ethnicity and the social/economic and health situation of employees. This information was then fed into the human trafficking database.

### 7. Grooming young watchdogs.

The Phayao Province Coordinating Team trained 306 watchdog volunteers in 124 villages. The activity received provincial government funding to operate and the Thai Government has sought international support to expand the model nationally; other provincial authorities have made study trips to observe it. The community watchdog concept encompassed practical action and longer-term capacity building, empowerment and sustainability.

### 8. Innovating education.

The Ban Mae Chan secondary school launched a project aimed at students in grades 7–9 to sensitize teachers on trafficking issues, adapt the curriculum to include trafficking, mobilize local resources, including employers, to offer skills training and job alternatives for young people and conduct an awareness-raising campaign among students, their families and communities on the problem of trafficking.

### 9. Reaching out to migrants.

The significant achievement of this project component was the publication of a guidebook entitled Travel Smart – Work Smart: A ‘smart’ guide for migrant workers in Thailand and helped to make migrants aware of the dangers of ill-prepared migration. It also explained their rights and obligations to them as workers – and where to go for help if those rights were abused. The guide was

been produced in six languages (Burmese, Thai, Khmer, Laotian, Vietnamese and Karen) and targets youth aged 15–24. It was reproduced in a second edition in mid-2008, and a new language, Shan was added.

But raising awareness isn’t enough. Direct help is needed when there are abuses. With its unique access to migrants, the Federation of Trade Unions- Burma collaborated with the Lawyers Council of Thailand and other ethnic-Burmese trade unions and other migrant associations to provide legal support to anyone seeking a case against an abusive employer.

## TIMELINE THAILAND

- 1996 The Prevention and Suppression of Prostitution Act 1996 addresses the demand in sexual exploitation by punishing procurers and customers; it also increased the penalties for enable the commercial sexual exploitation of any child.  
A National Policy and Plan of Action for the Prevention and Eradication of the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children was developed in 1996, followed by the Six-Year National Plan and Policy on Prevention and Resolution of Domestic and Cross-border Trafficking in Children and Women (2003). This plan covers prevention, suppression, assistance and protection, recovery and reintegration and works as a guideline for both government agencies and NGOs to collaborate in anti-trafficking efforts.
- 1997 Thailand progressively enacts a Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Women and Children Act; offenders can be those committing a crime in Thailand or abroad and provides protection for victims from foreign countries.
- 1998 A national Sub-Committee on Coordination for Combating Cross-Border Trafficking in Women and Children is created within the National Youth Bureau in the Office of the Prime Minister; in 2003 it is renamed the Sub-Committee to Combat Transnational Trafficking in Children and Women and shifted into the domain of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security.
- 1999 The Criminal Procedure Amendment Act includes measures to protect the rights of children who are victims, witnesses or



offenders.

- 2001 The Government ratifies ILO Convention No. 182 on the elimination of the worst forms of child labour.
- 2001 Thailand ratified the UN Convention on Transnational Organized Crime together with its protocols: Supplementary Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children; and Supplementary Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air.
- 2002 The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare split into separate ministries.  
The Government signs an MOU with the Lao Government on employment cooperation and reviews it in 2005, when it signs another MOU with the Lao on cooperation to combat human trafficking.
- 2003 Ministry officials participate in the Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative Against Trafficking (COMMIT) with five other sub-regional governments to continue cross-border cooperation and coordination in fighting human trafficking, recognizing that it results in both labour and sexual exploitation.  
The Government signs an MOU with the Cambodian Government on employment cooperation and a second one on cooperation to combat human trafficking -- the world's first bilateral agreement on trafficking.  
The Cabinet approves the National Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Children and Women.  
Nine northern provincial governments sign an MOU on Common Guidelines of Practices for Agencies Concerned with Cases Where Women and Children are Victims of Human Trafficking.  
The Child Protection Act supports child development with multidisciplinary teams at all levels providing greater protection.
- 2004 The Government ratifies ILO Convention No. 138 on the minimum age for employment.
- 2005 The Government signs a memorandum of understanding with Viet Nam to work together in repatriating trafficking victims and other cross-border issues.  
The Cabinet approves a Ministerial Regulation for migrant and stateless

children's access to education.

- The Government allocates 500 million baht for trafficking victim care, but only 100 million baht has been authorized since.
- 2007 Thailand and five other GMS countries sign a joint-declaration to coordinate efforts to combat trafficking in the Mekong sub-region (COMMIT IMM2).  
The Constitution (overturned in a military coup in 2006 but re-drafted and accepted 2007) contains overarching provisions forbidding slavery and forced labour.
- 2008 The Government signs an MOU with the Vietnamese Government on cooperation to fight human trafficking.  
A new anti-trafficking law comes into force. For the first time it recognizes that men and boys can be victims of trafficking and that labour exploitation can also be an end-result of the cycle. All those convicted are to face custodial sentences of varying lengths.

## THAILAND - Facts and Figures

### Socio-economic Overview

#### Demography:

- Total population: 63 million (Urban 31% Rural 69%)
- Population under age 20: 32%

#### Education (2000):

- Adult literacy rates: 97% (M), 94% (F)
- Primary enrolment: 87% (M) 85% (F)
- Secondary enrolment: 64% (M/F)

#### Economy (2002):

- GDP per capita: \$ 7,595 USD
- Population below national poverty line (1992): 16% (rural), 10% (urban)

#### Unemployment (2003):

5.5% (15-19); 5% (20-24)

Source: UNDP MDI 2005, World Bank, CIA Government Publications, UNESCAP Statistical Yearbook 2004, UNESCO (UIS) 2002-3, ILO Yearbook of Labour Statistics 2004

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## MIGRATION AND TRAFFICKING – Viet Nam (2000–2008)

Living in one of the region's fastest-growing economies, Viet Nam's 86 million people have been surrounded by phenomenal change that has touched them in promising and precarious ways. The 7–8 percent annual growth rate has delivered millions out of poverty and continues to provide potential for millions more to better their living standards, as indicated by the increasing population movements up and down the country. Between 1990 and 2006, urbanization increased from 20 percent to nearly 27 percent – with an average annual increase of more than 3 percent.<sup>1</sup> Put another way, whereas in 1990 only one in five Vietnamese was living in a city – today the figure is as high as one-in-three.

Viet Nam has high rates of literacy and access to education. But with nearly 30 percent of its population younger than 18, it remains challenged in providing employment options for the mass of young people entering the workforce each year.<sup>2</sup>

The large number of migrants moving within the country is another challenge. In Ho Chi Minh City, for instance, one in three of the city's current inhabitants arrived from somewhere else. Most migrants move away from families, familiarity and a known support base into areas where they may have less confidence, understanding of their rights or helpful resources. This vulnerability intensifies for those crossing borders due to unfamiliar languages and – especially, though not necessarily – if they go outside the legal routes.

While many people have benefited from the expansion and modernization of the economy, the new opportunities in the world of work have also created space for a small minority of job brokers, employers and others to exploit the vulnerable migrant population.



## THE VIET NAM – ILO PARTNERSHIP TO FIGHT LABOUR EXPLOITATION

The ILO's Mekong Sub-regional Project to Prevent Trafficking in Children and Women (TICW) initiated its drive to develop prevention partners in government as well as employers' and workers' organizations in Viet Nam in 2000.

In the early years the Government's main focus was on combating trafficking for sexual exploitation, particularly among young Vietnamese women. Of equal concern was women's vulnerability to marriage brokers who offered to find them "rich" husbands in other East Asian countries and beyond.

In 2007, the Vietnamese Government significantly acknowledged that trafficking for labour exploitation as well as sexual exploitation can take place anywhere – including within Viet Nam's own rapidly growing urban and industrial zones.

This expanded view created the opportunity for a partnership to develop safe migration

<sup>1</sup> Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific – 2007. (UN ESCAP pg. 8)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

information material for migrants and potential migrants moving for work within the country and abroad. As well, unique collaborations with the national employers' and workers' organizations allowed the project to confront the demand for an irregular workforce that can encourage trafficking of vulnerable migrants into labour exploitation.

Work was carried out with the Department for Social Evils Prevention of the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs and related agencies at the central level and in 14 communes in the three provinces of Quang Ninh, Thanh Hoa and Ho Chi Minh City.

A series of awareness raising workshops and direct assistance through skills training, education support and microfinance was conducted in two northern provinces (Quang Ninh and Thanh Hoa) with the provincial labour department and in three southern provinces (Tay Ninh, Hau Giang and Can Tho) and Ho Chi Minh City, also with provincial labour departments and the Vietnam Women's Union. These activities involved collaboration with the Provincial People's Committee, the Provincial Department of Public Security, the Provincial Border Guard Command and the Provincial Committee on Population, Family and Children.

Working with the Vietnam General Confederation of Labour showed clear benefit to the organization and helped to increase its awareness of trafficking and labour exploitation. It allowed for the training of union members to provide outreach services to young women migrants in selected industrial/ export processing zones of Ho Chi Minh City.

Employers were also involved, with skills and awareness training to improve employers' business practices in the recruitment and hiring of women migrant workers for national and overseas employment. This was achieved through partnership with the Viet Nam Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

## WHAT WORKED WELL

### 1. Improving skills of relevant agencies.

At least 300 staff in the central labour ministry and its provincial departments as well as the Women's Union and other related agencies have been trained to better confront labour exploitation, develop advocacy and safe migration awareness campaigns, monitor projects and mainstream good practices from the TICW project into other national programmes. About 800 information workers from villages have been trained to communicate with community people about trafficking and safe migration.

### 2. A comprehensive approach.

The integrated prevention activities confronted the trafficking problem with different but simultaneous responses and emphasized strategic partnerships with government, labour groups, mass organizations, migrants and would-be migrants. Awareness raising on migration risks, human and workers' rights, legal protection and gender issues were woven into the microfinance and vocational skills training activities for women likely to migrate or families with children at risk of leaving school, followed by help in finding job opportunities with local businesses or setting up in trade. The project reached some 90,000 households – though only 3,000 of them received the direct assistance.

This approach included an emphasis on keeping children in school. Through the Provincial Department of Education and Training, the project provided 1,300 children each 400,000 dong (US\$25) for equipment, tools and school fees if they returned or continue to school.

### 3. Reaching migrants.

The provincial labour department in Ho Chi Minh City trained members of the Vietnam General Confederation of Labour trade union members on trafficking and labour exploitation issues and then on how to reach



out to migrants, particularly young women, to inform them of their rights and responsibilities and to help them access referral services, including legal counselling. A new Travel Smart–Work Smart guidebook was developed in Vietnamese with useful information and contacts for migrants and potential migrants. The VGCL’s resorted to innovative outreach services by going to boarding houses and other residences to reach vulnerable internal migrants.

#### 4. Involving children.

As part of the awareness and advocacy campaign, more than 200 children came together in 2004 and 2007 to talk about trafficking in Viet Nam and make recommendations to the Government on improving measures to combat trafficking and protect children. Through preparation for the National Children Forum and the regional Mekong Youth Forum in Bangkok, the participating children learned to articulate their opinions and to work as leaders in their communities on the issues of trafficking and child labour. Central to this campaign (designed in collaboration with Save the Children) was the development of the concept of regular consultation of grassroots communities in policy-level formulation relating to trafficking – something the Government formally committed itself to in a joint declaration with the other five Greater Mekong Sub-region governments at a counter-trafficking meeting in Beijing in December 2007.

#### 5. Involving employers’ and workers’ organizations.

In 2005, the Viet Nam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) organized a brainstorming discussion among 22 employers and representatives of business association on what can be done to prevent trafficking of women and children. The session included sensitizing on internal labour migration issues and decent employment practices as well as workers’ rights. Participants were from key sectors such as garment, footwear, handicraft

and food processing industries that attract the majority of young migrant workers. Following that, 120 VCCI members in Quang Ninh, Thanh Hoa and Ho Chi Minh City were trained as secondary trainers to reach other employers on proper recruitment and hiring practices for women migrants and trafficking awareness. A handbook on The Roles of Employers in Preventing Trafficking was developed educate employers and recruiters on proper hiring and recruitment practices.

Both the VCCI and the Viet Nam General Confederation of Labour (VGCL) and another 30 core staff of the same provincial agencies have received awareness training. This was the first involvement of both employers’ and workers’ organizations in anti-trafficking efforts.


#### 6. Boosting the influence of the women’s federation.

One clear indication of the project’s impact has been the initiative of the Viet Nam Women’s Union to create a sub-regional alliance with other women’s federations. In July 2007 in Hanoi, the Mekong Women’s Forum brought together women from Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Thailand (and Viet Nam) to talk about good practices and country models. In Viet Nam, the project has increased the Women’s Union’s involvement at the local level and its influence nationally on the trafficking issue.

### TIMELINE VIET NAM

- 1980s Vietnam initiates first labour-export policy, allowing workers to leave for Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union and later, in 1994 to east Asia, with Taiwan and Malaysia the major destinations, followed by South Korea and Japan.
- 1986 The Doi Moi (renovation) economic reforms are introduced to adapt the one-party Socialist State to a market economy.



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- 1997 The Government issues “Directive (No.766) Assigning Responsibility for Carrying Out Measures to Prevent the Illegal Sending of Women and Children Abroad”, which called for a multi-sector response.
- 1998 The Vietnam Women's Union initiates an information campaign to warn women and girls of trafficking dangers and sets up rehabilitation services for trafficking victims returning from China.
- 2000 The Government ratifies ILO Convention No. 182 on the elimination of the worst forms of child labour, making it obligated to address labour exploitation and trafficking. Vietnamese and Chinese government officials met in Hanoi to discuss a joint strategy to overcome cross-border trafficking.
- 2003 Ministry officials participate in the Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative Against Trafficking (COMMIT) with five other sub-regional governments to continue cross-border cooperation and coordination in fighting human trafficking, recognizing that it results in both labour and sexual exploitation. The Ordinance on Prevention of Prostitution criminalizes sex trafficking. The Government ratifies ILO Convention No. 138 on the minimum age for employment.
- 2004 The Government issues a national action plan (2004–2010) to combat trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation (revisions are in the works to broaden the plan to cover labour exploitation and include men).
- 2005 The Government signs a memorandum of understanding with Thailand to work together in repatriating of trafficking victims and other cross-border issues.
- 2007 Viet Nam and five other GMS countries sign a joint-declaration to coordinate efforts to combat trafficking in the Mekong sub-region (COMMIT IMM2). Viet Nam and Cambodia signed bilateral agreement to fight trafficking.
- 2008 Viet Nam and Thailand sign bilateral agreement to fight trafficking.

## Viet Nam - Facts and Figures

### Socio-economic Overview

#### Demography:

- Total population (2006): 84.11 millions (Urban: 26%; Rural 74%)
- Population below 20: 40%

#### Education:

- Adult literacy rates (2006): 97%
- Rate of primary school age students going to primary school (2004-2005): 97,5%
- Rate of lower secondary age students going to school: (2005): 85%

#### Economy (2007):

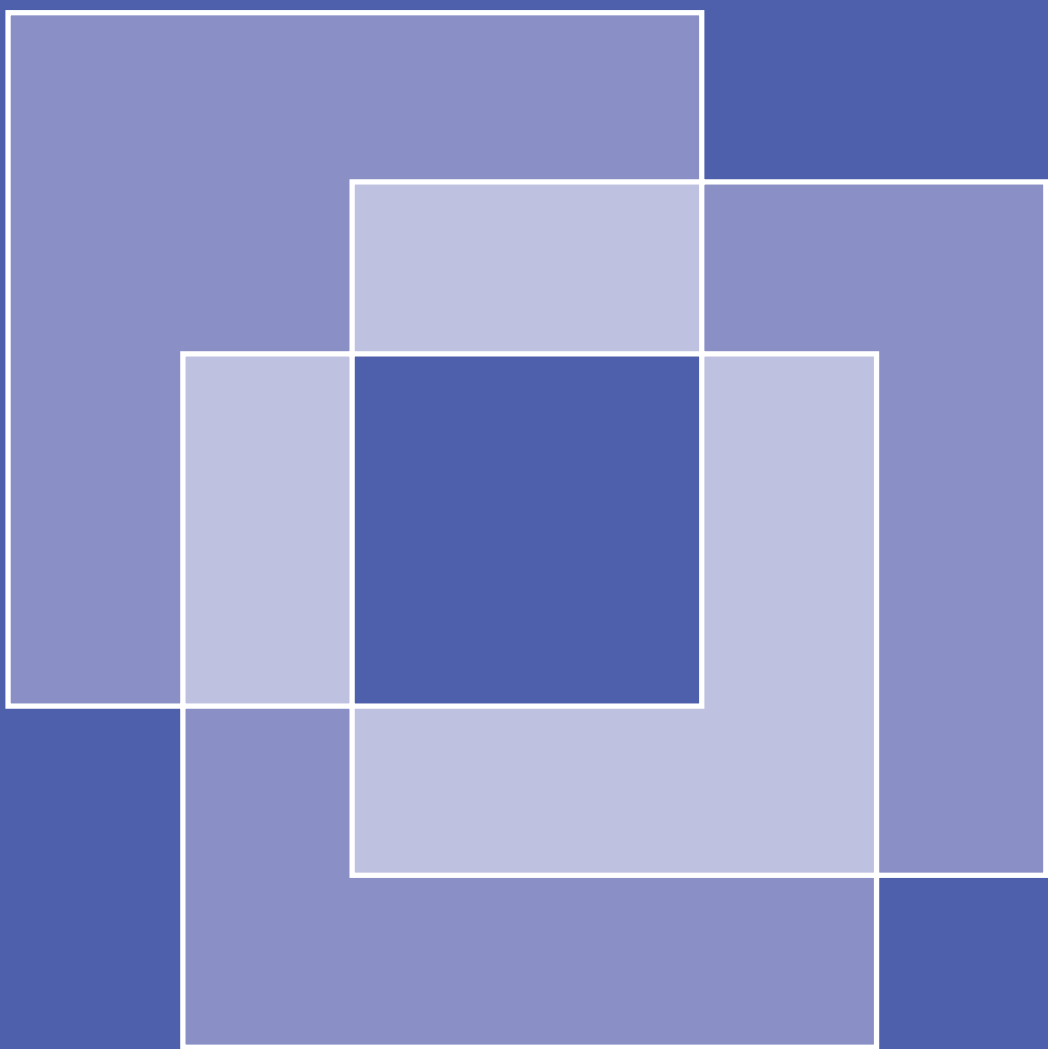
- GDP per capita (2007): US\$720
- Percentage living below national poverty line: 14,75%

#### Unemployment (2005):

5,3%

Source: General Statistics Office 2005, 2006, Ministry of Education and Training 2006, Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs 2007.

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## 4. your questions answered about the link between migration and trafficking for labour exploitation and the approaches required

TICW's eight years of project experience have yielded many lessons about the most effective ways to fight trafficking within a labour migration paradigm. Many of them have been documented and made accessible at TICW Website: [www.childtrafficking.net](http://www.childtrafficking.net) (or [www.ilo.org/asia/child/trafficking](http://www.ilo.org/asia/child/trafficking)).

What follows is a summary of the highlights described in this publication, presented as Questions and Answers:

*Related to the articulation of human trafficking within the labour exploitation/migration framework:*

### 1. What is human trafficking and what has it got to do with labour?

Labour exploitation that includes movement within a country or across borders is considered to be human trafficking when it involves a person below the age of 18 or, in the case of an adult, when it has involved coercion or deception. Human trafficking is therefore fundamentally 'labour exploitation into which people have (been) moved'.

### 2. Isn't the easiest thing just to stop people moving to find work?

No. That may sound easy but movement for work – called 'labour migration' – is a fundamental right, and it has to be protected. The key to combating human trafficking lies in making sure that, when people seek to move for work, they can do so safely and within the law. This means eliminating 'unsafe movement' and 'labour exploitation'. This is true regardless of where the exploitation takes place, and it encompasses sexual exploitation as well as formal and informal work sectors.

It is vital to keep a balance between eliminating unsafe migration and upholding the right to regular migration. In fact, promoting responsible approaches to regular migration – including regulating legal migration channels so that they are open and accessible to those seeking legitimately to move – is an important contribution to eliminating human trafficking. Promoting 'safe migration' among those who are extremely likely to seek to move for work is in itself a (trafficking) risk-reduction strategy.

### 3. Is that why TICW has developed programming 'within a migration framework'?

Yes. TICW was the first project to do that and remains one of the few initiatives that make a clear programming link between migration and trafficking. Not only does it make good programming sense, articulating human trafficking as a function of labour migration/exploitation equips governments and other anti-trafficking actors with a much wider battery of instruments and mechanisms they can use in efforts to eliminate trafficking. These include international, regional and national labour laws and mechanisms such as labour inspections, Decent Work agendas, child labour frameworks such as Time-Bound Programmes and National Plans of Action, laws and processes focusing on social development such as the Millennium Development Goals, as well as more general tools such as human rights instruments, police and migration procedures, national plans for children and gender-specific anti-violence measures.

The labour migration/exploitation approach to anti-trafficking efforts also facilitates the

engagement of workers' and employers' organizations in actions that are labour-specific. This uses the specific strengths of labour-sector actors and promotes actions that are complementary to (rather than repetitive of) the efforts of other anti-trafficking actors, including NGOs, international agencies and governments, as well as communities, families, children and young people.

*Relating to the impact of this articulation of trafficking on anti-trafficking programming:*

#### 4. What does the 'migration framework' mean in terms of programming?

Understanding human trafficking as the 'flip side' of safe labour migration leads to an increased focus on destination-side prevention efforts, since it is the exploitation outcomes of movement that transform labour migration into trafficking. This is a fundamentally new element of anti-trafficking programming, which has hitherto largely considered prevention as a source-side action only, and destination-side actions as being 'after the fact' and focused on reintegration and rehabilitation of victims.

Breaking the mould by looking at the 'end' of movement as a legitimate place for prevention activities means that we must review our understanding of the factors at play in human trafficking and, in particular, at the destination-side factors that contribute to it. After years of vague and undefined notions of 'demand', this is a break-through in understanding exploitation and the people and mechanisms that cause it to happen.

#### 5. What does 'destination-side prevention' mean for governments and national actors?

The focus on destination-side programming mobilizes governments in so-called 'receiving' countries or areas in a tangible, positive way. Instead of focusing on 'destination' as 'too late' to act, it emphasizes the important role that governments and others, like national employers' and workers' organizations, can play in combating human trafficking that occurs in their countries, rather than simply to their citizens elsewhere. This is particularly important when we consider that much human trafficking occurs within national borders (domestic trafficking, as opposed to cross-border).

#### 6. So should we concentrate on programmes in destination countries, rather than in places from which people migrate or are trafficked?

No. It is important to have programmes at every possible point on the migration or trafficking chain: in source countries, along migration routes and in places of destination. The focus should be on prevention, so that would-be migrants, people who are in the process of migrating and those who have arrived all are protected from falling victim to trafficking. What TICW has shown quite clearly is that destination-side programming should not be just an exercise in 'recovery and repatriation' – the most common destination-side programme choice – but should also include prevention and protection, and focus on ensuring that people do not become trafficking victims, rather than just helping them when it is already too late.

#### 7. So are all programmes run in destination countries anti-trafficking actions?

No. Whether prevention is undertaken at source or destination, it is vital to understand that some actions may be good poverty-reduction measures or contribute to social development goals in general but that they may not necessarily have an impact on trafficking. To have an impact on trafficking, prevention measures must target, at both source and destination, those who are most likely to become trafficking victims. This can only be done by identifying people who are particularly at risk – vulnerable – to falling into the hands of traffickers or finding themselves in exploitative work. Contrary to what people commonly think, this does not usually include the poorest people, since they do not have the means to seek to move. Instead, the most vulnerable are often young people, especially those who have had some education, or people of all ages who have aspirations for a better life.

*Relating to TICW field experience/programming:*





# Meeting the Challenge 4

## 8. How can we know who these people at risk are?

TICW's experience has included developing databases with confidential information on people who, for one reason or another, are vulnerable to exploitation and/or trafficking. Vulnerability depends on a number of things – age, sex, family circumstances, level of education, a sudden problem in the family, for example – and it is important to keep track of these vulnerability factors over time. For maximum impact, it is important to target prevention programming at those who are most likely to fall into the hands of traffickers (including those who exploit the labour at destination). Often the best people to do this are members of the community who have been trained to see the warning signs, and TICW has run programmes to set up community watch schemes and to mobilize local authorities and groups to organize this kind of action in the community.

## 9. What about prevention programming in countries of destination?

Programmes are also most likely to have an immediate impact on trafficking if they target the labour sectors where exploitation is known or is most likely to occur. This includes hidden or informal sectors outside the regular labour market, like street trades, domestic work and in many countries the sex sector. Within the regular labour market, particularly in sectors like tourism and hospitality, entertainment sectors, manufacturing and agriculture, workers' organizations, employers and labour inspectors are ideally placed to help identify potentially exploitative workplaces and to support those workplaces that are working to ensure labour rights for national and migrant workers.

## 10. Do people often fall victim to trafficking because they have financial problems? Are micro-finance and income-generation projects the best way to reduce their vulnerability?

Not necessarily, at least not as stand-alone projects. People whose financial situation improves may be prompted to use that new income to move to find better work or living conditions, and this can increase the risk that they will fall prey to recruiters or traffickers. It is important that, alongside the income-raising project, they also have access to better information, safe migration initiatives, legal recruitment information and schemes and other elements of programming that ensure that, if they do decide to migrate, they do so safely, into safe work. One of TICW's most important lessons is that it is vital to recognize the complexity and continuum of vulnerability and trafficking by packaging responses for any individual or target group. For example, packaging income generation programmes with information about safe migration reduces the risk that someone whose income has improved will enter unsafe migration and fall victim to traffickers.

## 11. So which is more important: running projects in the countries and areas that people migrate from, or the countries or areas that they migrate to?

What is important is at all times to take account of all the components of the migration or trafficking chain, including source, recruitment, movement and destination. Migration and trafficking are both series of linked events, all of which require different but simultaneous responses. This means that coordinated plans of action that use the specific strengths of different anti-trafficking actors in each of these areas are most likely to have a positive outcome. It also means that, where a government in a source country is working to prevent trafficking at

source, and a government in a destination country is working to prevent trafficking and exploitation at destination, people will be able to migrate safely and work without being exploited.

**12.**

### **Are governments mainly responsible for acting against trafficking?**

Of course governments have the prime responsibility to prevent trafficking and to protect people. They have signed international and in many cases regional commitments saying they will do that. They also have a responsibility to help people to migrate freely and to enjoy their rights as workers. They've signed agreements to that effect, too. Local and national processes are a key to success and sustainability, and investing time and resources in this area is a key component of impact, even if it is not directly measurable. But many other actors have a role to play in preventing trafficking and protecting those who may be at risk: trade unions and employers' organizations, local communities, law enforcement officials and others have all been mobilized in TICW activities at local and national levels. Comprehensive partnerships reflect the necessary multi-faceted nature of the anti-trafficking response and the multi-disciplinary approach to effective action.

**13.**

### **What do we mean when we talk about helping people to 'participate' in anti-trafficking work?**

TICW has, from the beginning, worked very closely with local communities and supported them to improve their own capacity for monitoring risks, identifying problems and acting quickly to intervene. TICW has also run some special actions to involve children in its work, since they often are overlooked when communities have a chance to participate. 'Participation' has to go beyond just giving a voice and result in tangible mobilization and empowerment, since this is the best way to ensure mainstreaming and sustainability of ground-level actions.

**14.**

### **Some anti-trafficking actions include information and awareness raising. What has TICW learned about these?**

Awareness-raising projects are rarely measurable and only likely to have an impact to the extent that they are appropriately targeted, based on accurate and meaningful messages, and respectful of the best interests of beneficiaries. Otherwise they are no more than clever words or pretty posters.

As for research and data gathering: knowledge is not an end in itself but should be gathered as a basis for action. No anti-trafficking initiatives should be embarked on without a sound understanding of the nature of the problem being addressed and the impact of any action on the intended beneficiaries.

*Relating to lessons that take into account the need to protect human rights*

**15.**

### **TICW cannot be everywhere and has to choose which areas it will work in. What does that mean for people in other areas?**

It is important to recognize that geographical targeting and even targeting vulnerability opens up the potential of 'displacement and replacement' or 'push down/pop up', that is, that preventing trafficking in one place or protecting one group of vulnerable people may displace the risk to another area or another group. It is vital to remain alert to this at all times. The best interests of the child as well as the human rights of all beneficiaries and others who may be affected by programming must remain not only a principle of all actions but an active benchmark of ongoing monitoring and evaluation.





## End Notes:

- i Although efforts continue to find ways to model reliable estimates of the numbers of people who are trafficked (notably the competitive process to develop measurement methodologies launched under the UNIAP SIREN project: [www.no-trafficking.org](http://www.no-trafficking.org)), it is still impossible to give reliable figures at this time. The ILO estimates that there are 6.6 million children in unconditional worst forms of child labour in the Asia-Pacific region, a category that includes children in exploitative labour as a result of being trafficked, but this of course takes no account of women trafficked from, around and through the region.
- ii *Cambodia's 'beer promotion girls' – their recruitment, working conditions and vulnerabilities*, ILO-IPEC/TICW, Bangkok 2006.
- iii The Mekong Challenge: Underpaid, Overworked and Overlooked – The realities of young migrant workers in Thailand. ILO Bangkok 2006
- iv All of these Mekong Challenge reports are available for download in PDF format from the project's Website [www.childtrafficking.net](http://www.childtrafficking.net)
- v Fukui Ryu and Llanto Gilberto, 2003, *Rural Finance and microfinance development in transition economies in South-East and East Asia*.
- vi Ministry of Industry and Handicrafts and GTZ, 1996, Results of a National Survey: *Small and Medium Enterprises in Lao PDR*. New studies are planned for later 2007.
- vii Martin, P. The Economic Contribution of Migrant Workers to Thailand: Towards policy development. ILO Bangkok. 2007
- viii *Cambodia's hotel and guesthouse workers – their recruitment, working conditions and vulnerabilities*, ILO-IPEC/TICW, Bangkok 2006.
- ix Also available in The Mekong Challenge: Underpaid, Overworked and Overlooked. ILO-TICW Bangkok 2006





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