



An ILO-TICW Project Overview in Cambodia:

The situation:

Cambodia is one of the least developed countries in the Greater Mekong Sub-region. Victims of human trafficking originate here, arrive and pass through from other countries such as Viet Nam, and are exploited within the country in destination areas such as Phnom Penh, and the tourist areas of Siem Reap and Sihanouk Ville. Thailand is the primary destination for most cross-border migrants – and victims of trafficking – with young people most commonly exploited in prostitution, on fishing boats and as street beggars.

In Cambodia, trafficking is often linked to hasty and ill-prepared migration resulting from a variety of factors, but stems primarily from extreme poverty, lack of access to education and training, limited employment opportunities at home, a socio-economic imbalance between rural and urban areas, as well as the impact of globalization and rising consumer expectations. The presence of landmines has reduced the usability of land for agriculture, further reducing economic opportunities in rural areas.

The aftermath of the Khmer Rouge regime is still felt both psychologically and economically and plays a direct role in labour and sexual exploitation arising from ill-prepared migration. The upheavals caused by the conflict and lack of opportunities in rural areas have fueled a return to the cities and urban areas, all but emptied during the Khmer Rouge period. By 1996, one third of the population had changed residence. As a result, most people presently living in Phnom Penh were not born there and have little or no family support system.

With well over half the population below the age of 20, Cambodia faces a growing problem of providing decent work for its young population, further increasing the drive toward cross-border migration for employment, and perpetuating the cycle of vulnerability to human trafficking.



ILO-TICW Working with Stakeholders and Partners in Cambodia:

In Cambodia, the ILO-TICW project (Phase II) has a working relationship with the Cambodian National Council for Children (CNCC).

The Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MoLVT) worked with the project in Phase I through a National Sub Committee on Child Labour. The Ministry of Women and Veteran Affairs has been chosen as the national government focal point for the UN Inter-Agency Project to Combat Human Trafficking in the GMS, and with which the ILO-TICW project collaborates.

Provincial Committees on Child Right's Protection dealing with trafficking prevention were established in Phase I of the project in Prey Veng province and Sihanouk Ville Municipality.

Map courtesy UNIAP

Socio-economic Overview

Demography:

Total population: 13.3 million
(Urban 17% Rural 83%)
Population below 20: 56% (1998)

Education:

Literacy rates age (15+): 80% (M), 58% (F)
Primary school enrolment: 96% (M) 91% (F)
Secondary school enrolment: 30% (M) 19% (F)

Economy:

GDP per capita: US \$ 1,446
Population below national poverty line: 14% (U), 40% (R)

Unemployment (2000):

2.5% Estimate

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

Prevention framework:

The ILO-TICW project works to prevent trafficking by working with, and through, disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young women in Cambodia. It also works with Government, Workers' and Employers' groups to develop practices that will reduce the vulnerability of the population to human trafficking.

The Royal Government of Cambodia has ratified all 8 of the ILO's core conventions – the only country in the Greater Mekong Sub-region to do so – including Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour and Convention 138 setting out the Minimum Age for Employment.

Within this framework, and the recommendations for its implementation, there exists an opportunity to build and enforce a system of labour inspections in workplaces where young people are vulnerable to exploitation.

The workplan (2006 – 2008):

Selected sending/transit areas:

- Prey Veng
- Svay Rieng
- Kampong Cham
- Banteay Meanchey (transit)

Selected receiving areas:

- Phnom Penh
- Sihanouk Ville
- Siem Reap

Building the knowledge base..

In 2004, a series of rapid assessments was carried out regarding attitudes toward migration and the experiences of migrants, many of whom already had or planned to migrate to Thailand. Baseline surveys into the working conditions of young women in the tourism and entertainment sectors within Cambodia were also conducted. The key element in both sets of research was to better understand the vulnerabilities and stigmas attached to various occupations.

The reports were published in 2005 and 2006 and the information is presently being used to better target interventions to prevent trafficking and vulnerability.

Advocating and awareness raising..

Through its partnership with the Government and national and provincial-based NGOs, the ILO-TICW project is raising awareness in schools and villages about the dangers of ill-prepared migration in the migrant and trafficking source provinces of Prey Veng, Svay Rieng, and Kampong Cham, as well as the transit province of Banteay Meanchey. These interventions aim to shed light on the tricks that traffickers use to lure young people away from their families while explaining the types of exploitation that await – both within the country and across the border.

Receiving areas of Phnom Penh, Siem Reap and Sihanouk Ville are the focus of demand-side responses, especially in the tourism and entertainment sectors. But unlike many other projects, these initiatives focus not just on international tourism and entertainment venues – but the effects of domestic tourism as well. In Sihanouk Ville, the project works with young women employed in the entertainment sector to raise awareness about the dangers of sexual and labour exploitation and how to take steps to protect themselves.

In 2005 the project embarked in a partnership to support efforts by the Government and others to keep Cambodian children and young people safe from the excesses of a rapidly growing tourism sector – excesses such as the sexual and labour exploitation that can occur when there is a lack of monitoring and workplace inspection. The Royal Cambodian Government's Child Safe Tourism campaign is now underway to train Government officials, hotel, restaurant and entertainment venue staff about how to combat the exploitation of children in the tourism sector. It also aims to provide young migrants with the information they need to avoid becoming victims through this initiative as well as through information provided by the ILO-TICW sub-regional campaign 'Travel Smart – Work Smart'.

Special attention to children's advocacy:

In September 2004, more than 50 Cambodian children, ages 10-17 from key project areas, gathered in Phnom Penh to take part in the "Voices of Children National Forum: Promoting Action against Human Trafficking" The forum was organized by the Cambodian National Council for Children in cooperation with Child Rights Foundation, Children Committee, and Children in Love Association. The event was technically and financially supported by ILO-TICW, UNICEF, World Education and IOM. The young participants were either victims of trafficking, from vulnerable groups, or child rights advocates. The forum resulted in a **Cambodian Children's Agenda for Action** which was presented to senior Government representatives. Five of the children were selected by their peers to attend the Mekong Sub-regional Forum in Bangkok in October 2004. Further children's advocacy and participation initiatives were scheduled for 2005 and 2006, both in Cambodia and Sub-regionally.

Building capacity to tackle the problem..

The project is targeting selected gate-way communities along the Thai border where it is working with Government departments and cross-border networks to improve bilateral cooperation between the cross-border provinces.

The Travel Smart – Work Smart campaign mentioned above also plays a capacity building role in cross-border prevention work. The ILO-TICW project is focusing on labour migration management in Thailand through joint meetings with Cambodian officials, workshops, training and capacity building exercises, especially relating to developing effective pre-departure services on the Cambodian side. The Government officials attend workshops on trafficking prevention practices and also join in technical cooperation projects within the context of two bilateral MOU's signed by the two countries in 2003: "Cooperation in the Employment of Workers" and "Bilateral Cooperation for Eliminating Trafficking in Children and Women and Assisting Victims of Trafficking."

To follow the spirit of these two MOUs, a joint effort with IOM is under way to build up the capacity of the Royal Government of Cambodia to promote safer labour migration and progressive prevention of trafficking in children and women through the 'legalization' of undocumented migrants in Thailand and enhancement of effective legal labour migration management systems.

Providing targeted assistance and support..

Alternative income generation is underway in targeted communities and vocational training is offered to older teens and young women in these areas to give them the skills they need to compete in the workplace. Non formal education for vulnerable groups is also offered to young people in target communities with rural skills training and direct assistance offered to those who do not want to migrate.

The direct assistance and vocational training sites were carefully chosen through the NSOE and PSOE process (see below), with 3 communes selected in each province by their individual needs.

The direct assistance component was scheduled to wind up in the autumn of 2006 and exit strategies were being planned.

Collaboration and partnerships:

The project's interventions are guided by National and Provincial Stakeholder Exercises (NSOEs and PSOEs), carried out in collaboration and consultation with the Royal Government of Cambodia's Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MOLVT), National Sub Committee on Child Labour (NSC) and Cambodian National Council for Children (CNCC).

In addition, the ILO-TICW project coordinates its in-country efforts with the United Nations Inter-agency Project on Human Trafficking in the GMS (UNIAP) which oversees implementation of the multi-lateral COMMIT Plan of Action, which is evident in the Child Safe Tourism campaign, and the collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism.

In 2005, the ILO-TICW project initiated a relationship with the BBC World Service Trust to influence trafficking-related episodes of the hit Cambodian TV soap opera 'Taste of Life'. Discussions were underway in early 2006 about further collaboration.

Working with Employers' and Workers' Organizations:

The Cambodian Union Federation (CUF) and the Cambodian Federation of Employers and Business Associations (CAMFEBA) are both active partners and advisors in the ILO-TICW work in Cambodia. Project Advisory Committee of Trade Unions Against Child Labor (PACT Against Child Labour) is active in the Child Safe Tourism campaign.

Both main bodies are also active participants in the Sub-regional Advisory Committee meetings (SURAC) and have led the call for more worker and employer involvement in the sub-regional COMMIT process.

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International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC)