

Findings at-a-glance:

“People Trafficking” Baseline Awareness Survey in Three Lao Provinces

Prepared by: Lucy O'Connor

Commissioned by the ILO Mekong Sub-regional Project
to Combat Trafficking in Children and Women

Final Report: December 2006

Abstract:

This baseline survey was undertaken as part of the ILO Mekong Project's commitment to help raise awareness of Lao children and women about the hazards of ill-prepared migration and how that ill-prepared migration can lead to trafficking and sexual and labour exploitation. It was conducted in 3 provinces with a sample population of 340 people - split evenly among our target beneficiary groups between boys/girls 15-17 (e.g. of working age) and young women 18-25.

The main purpose was to determine the level of awareness about trafficking and the connection to migration. It was also to determine the role played by Lao-language media in disseminating information about labour migration to neighbouring Thailand, as the latter is the main destination country and evidently the place where some young Lao children and women occasionally face trafficking-related labour and sexual exploitation.

These are some of the main findings:

- + **The vast majority of people get their news/information from TV - Thai TV specifically** – in these border provinces
- + Of those that do listen to radio, girls are more likely (in Lao language)
- + Around 3/4 are familiar with the Lao-language term for human trafficking - though their clarity of the issue and the term varies
- + Most have seen/heard media reports about trafficking and migration. Most of the images were negative.
- + Almost all knew that Lao people work in Thailand
- + Slightly more than half (56%) were aware that the Lao Government allows its citizens to work in Thailand.
- + **Around 60% were aware that the Lao Government had employment centres where prospective migrants to Thailand could register - only half of that number knew where they were located.**
- + **Champassack Province had the highest awareness level**
- + **More than 70% associated trafficking with 'low wages' in labour exploitation** followed by prostitution as the number 2 answer
- + Most young people think a trafficker is likely a stranger - only 15% thought it could be a neighbour or someone they knew
- + The most vulnerable were the least informed
- + **There is a very positive image of Thailand - 44% recalled hearing reports about people making money there and sending some back to family in Lao PDR**
- + More than one-in-four had heard negative reports about Lao people being fined when they returned home by Lao authorities
- + **The young people were almost unanimous in wanting more information about safe migration and how to avoid traffickers/bad employers.**
- + They recommended TV as the best medium for that.