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An ILO-TICW Project Overview in Yunnan Province, China:

The situation:

As both a source and destination province, Yunnan is – per capita – one of China’s worst affected areas of trafficking in children and women. Most trafficking takes place internally. That is to say most movement occurs within Yunnan and into other provinces of China. Many of the victims are young women who think they are heading to a new job but are unwittingly 'sold' as brides to men in isolated rural areas or tricked into other exploitative occupations. Trafficking for marriage exists because many of the men in remote areas cannot afford the dowry required of a formal marriage. The trafficker effectively 'provides' a bride for a much lower price.

Teenage girls and young women are frequently coerced by brokers or acquaintances. Often a trafficker approaches the potential victim during their voluntary migration with false offers of a job. Instead the migrants are redirected into situations of sexual and labour exploitation. Blind trust and/or a lack of knowledge about legal rights to an employment contract are aggravating factors.

There is some cross-border movement as well, with Thailand as the primary destination, via Lao PDR and Myanmar. Some trafficked victims from Viet Nam also end up in Yunnan. Jiangcheng County (Simao City) and Menghai County have the highest incidence of internal and cross-border trafficking in Yunnan (and therefore have been identified as focal areas for the ILO-TICW project activities). Sending areas covered also include Simao and Honghe Prefectures. Kunming City is the main receiving centre.



ILO-TICW: Working with stakeholders and partners in Yunnan, China

The All China Women's Federation (ACWF) is the main national-level partner of the project.

Focused exclusively on interventions in Yunnan Province of China, the implementing responsibility was delegated by the ACWF to the Yunnan Province Women's Federation (YPWF). Through the leadership of the YPWF and under the auspices of the Governor's Office, a Provincial Project Steering Committee (PPSC) was established with 14 relevant provincial departments and several social organizations. Working committees with mirror image memberships were established in selected prefectures, counties and townships of the project. Many members of these committees became implementing partners of the project, such as the Women's Federation, the Education Bureau and the Agriculture Bureau.

Efforts are being undertaken to extend work with the Governor's office and with key agencies at national level such as the Ministry of Labour and Social Security and the Industry and Commerce Federation. In coordination with the UK donor DFID, and the Chinese authorities, ILO-IPEC has begun a similar project in a further five provinces. With a base in Beijing, the additional four year project is operational in Anhui, Guangdong, Henan, Hunan and Jiangsu.

Map courtesy UNIAP

Socio-economic Overview

Demography:

Total population: 43.3 million (51.7% M, 48.3% F)
(Urban: 26%, Rural: 74%)
25 minority groups account for 1/3 of population
Population below 20: (not avail.) below 15: 26%

Education:

Adult literacy rates: 85%
Primary school enrolment: 99.6% (equal m/f ratio)
Secondary school (junior) enrolment: 87.5%
89% (M), 86% (F)

Economy (2002):

Per capita GDP: US \$627
(Rural per capita income: US \$195)
Percentage of those living below national poverty line: 33% *
(rural only)

Unemployment rate: 4%

(only urban figures published)

Source: Yunnan Provincial Statistics Bureau, Census 2000. *
This calculation is made from the following rural figures:
Absolute poverty population: 2.86 million
Low income population: 7.64 million

Prevention Framework:

China has ratified 23 ILO Conventions, including both core Conventions relating to the elimination of the worst forms of child labour (including those involving trafficking) and minimum ages for employment (C182 & C138).

To understand the focus and framework of ILO-TICW Phase II in Yunnan, it is necessary to briefly look at the work of Phase I (2000 – 2003).

A number of partners (mass organizations) and one academic society were involved in Phase I through the Yunnan Women's Federation, the Industrial and Commerce Federation and the Yunnan Provincial Academy of Social Science. For Phase II the Kunming Railway Bureau and Yunnan Provincial Statistics Bureau were introduced as new partners.

In essence, Phase I was a coordinated and integrated 'call to action' – fully supported by the Yunnan Women's Federation, and backed by the All China Women's Federation in Beijing.

Much of Phase II focuses on replication of the good practice activities and programmes from Phase I, expanding the geographical areas covered and mainstreaming them into public policy. These programmes were developed by partner agencies at province, city/prefecture and county level. They covered the thematic areas of capacity building of officials, awareness raising of teens and young women (through the Education Bureau) in cooperation with another ILO project 'Spring Bud'. Direct assistance to rural communities (in cooperation with agricultural bureaus) provided vocational training and supported the construction of Women's Centres in both sending and receiving areas.

The workplan (2006 – 2008)

Building the knowledge base..

In 2005, a survey conducted by the Yunnan Provincial Statistics Bureau was published by the ILO-TICW project. 'Analysis Report of Baseline Data Survey' for Yunnan Province (available in Chinese and English) focused on data gathered in eight new counties/districts.

In the migrant sending areas, this baseline survey identified the situation of vulnerable children and women and focused on new target sites for future project interventions. In receiving areas, the purpose was to identify the current situation of migrant workers, their attitudes toward migration and to select sectors at high risk of trafficking for project interventions.

The publication highlighted the difficulties and bewildering array of rules and procedures faced by internal labour migrants while trying to find work through legal channels while avoiding human traffickers.

A separate video-documentary was also underway in 2006 to illustrate – and document – the real-life situation of migrant women leaving their villages in search of work in the main migrant receiving areas of the capital, Kunming, the problems they encountered and lessons learned along the way.

Advocating and raising awareness..

In Yunnan Province, the project supports advocacy designed to raise awareness of legal migration channels within the country and to provide focal points where teenage girls and young women can go for information. In project villages with a high-rate of migration and at destinations in Kunming City, Women's Centres have been established through the Yunnan Women's Federation to provide migrants with information on jobs (job-matching), and ways to avoid exploitation.

In partnership with the Yunnan Railway Bureau, train station staff in Kunming routinely distribute counter-trafficking information material to young women passing through the capital en route to other areas.

In collaboration with other ILO initiatives and the Yunnan Education Bureau, village girls from ethnic minority families now receive classroom education on the dangers of human trafficking and ways to prevent their own exploitation. An added benefit has been the introduction of a new style of learning where the traditional 'rote' method of memorization/recitation has been replaced with interactive student-teacher lessons. A video of the main teaching points was made as an instructional tool for educators and has now been distributed for further replication to 129 counties across Yunnan.

In coordination with Save the Children UK, the ILO-TICW project has promoted the idea that children should have a voice in policy-level decisions about trafficking prevention. In 2004, the two organizations, in collaboration with Government agencies in Yunnan and neighbouring Guangxi Province, brought together children from areas with a high incidence of trafficking to discuss

better prevention methods. They presented their local officials with a set of recommendations to better protect children and prevent human trafficking. 5 of the participants later attended a sub-regional Mekong Children's Forum on Human Trafficking in Bangkok.

Building capacity to tackle the problem..

Prior to ILO-TICW Phase I (2000 – 2003), the focus of government interventions in Yunnan Province had been on law enforcement and on rescues and rehabilitation of trafficking victims. Very little focus was placed on prevention measures. Trafficking had traditionally been defined as the kidnapping and smuggling of baby boys for sale to richer childless families.

But these stereotypes are now being broken down and the approaches are changing.

Provinces and regions badly affected by trafficking in women and children have established a Leading group on Combating Woman and Child Trafficking. A broader definition of trafficking is now accepted (e.g. labour exploitation of young women and girls) and a more comprehensive approach to the problem is underway. The group's efforts have led to the launch of several large-scale capacity building campaigns to educate workers, employers as well as government officials about trafficking and labour exploitation.

In Kunming City train station staff have been trained how to spot vulnerable young women in transit and to identify potential traffickers traveling with them. In rural areas, villagers have been trained to report strangers entering their villages and to be aware of the tricks traffickers use – passing on that knowledge to others.

The All China Women's Federation through its provincial chapters has also taken significant steps to promote legislation, legal literacy and assist in the rehabilitation of woman and child victims of trafficking.

Providing targeted assistance and support..

The Women's Centres in target villages are offering training in entrepreneurialism to enable villagers to develop marketable, homegrown businesses skills. This allows family members to remain closer to home, and thus reduce their vulnerability to traffickers.

Now many young women have started their own small businesses and are able to increase their livelihoods without the need for migration. Through ILO training material such as 'GET Ahead', young women are learning to put their skills to work closer to home, improve the financial stabilities of their families, and reduce the risk of family breakdown – often one of the factors in ill-prepared migration.

Collaboration and Partnerships:

The main collaboration and partnerships developed are with the implementing agency the Yunnan Women's Federation, the national-level All China Women's Federation, the Yunnan Agricultural Bureau, the Education Bureau, and the Labour Bureau.

The Project Provincial Steering Committee is made up of 14 relevant departments.

Working with Employers' and Workers' Organizations:

Phase II of this project has reemphasized the need for greater involvement by workers' and employers' groups.

In 2005, these partnerships were significantly strengthened with both groups. Representatives attended and participated in the ILO-TICW's Sub-regional Advisory Committee meeting in Bangkok.

In the Provincial capital, the Kunming City Private Economy Association has taken a leading role in awareness raising activities with its members, setting an example for other employers' groups to follow.

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