



PROJECT OVERVIEW

THAILAND

The Regional Project to Combat Trafficking in Children for Labour and Sexual Exploitation TICSA II operates in Thailand as a part of ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (ILO-IPEC).

Child trafficking in Thailand

Thailand is a country of origin, transit and destination for labour migration and human trafficking, with both occurring internally and across borders. Mainly influenced by the country's social and economic progress, Thailand represents by far the biggest destination country for labour migrants (both regular and irregular) in the Mekong sub-region.

There are no official government statistics on the number of children trafficked into and out of Thailand. However, what is known of recruitment conditions and exploitation indicates that a significant number of under-aged migrant workers are victims of trafficking. The worst forms of child labour remain present, largely exploiting migrant and stateless young people living in Thailand. They are mostly from hill tribes in Thailand and from Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar, but trafficking cases of children from Bangladesh have been reported.

Various studies indicate that most child trafficking victims in Thailand originally sought migration for employment willingly and may have been misled in their home village or at a border crossing point by unscrupulous job brokers operating to fill a demand or a perceived interest in child labour. The majority of these children end up in Thailand's large unregulated sectors, such as domestic work, commercial sex, construction, agriculture, fishing, manufacturing and various kinds of factories.

Their experiences range from receiving wages much lower than the national minimum wage to sexual and physical assaults and



Child beggar in Bangkok. (Photo: ILO/Deloche)

ILO-TICSA Regional Project overview

Development objective: To contribute to the reduction of trafficking in children for exploitive labour in south and south-east Asia

Coverage: Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Indonesia, Thailand.

Main areas of work:

- ▶ Prevention of child trafficking through direct assistance to children, families and communities;
- ▶ Protection of child survivors of trafficking through rehabilitation & reintegration assistance, including development of child-friendly guidelines for caregivers;
- ▶ Policy development and capacity building of within governments, employers' and workers' organizations and NGO partners;
- ▶ Improvement of the knowledge base on trafficking (research and documentation).

Duration: TICSA phase II (2003–2006)

Budget: US\$ 3.0 million (+1.5 million under the ILO Time-Bound Programme in Nepal)

Donor: US Department of Labour

deprivation of the basic workers' rights guaranteed by Thai laws. Migrant children also are particularly vulnerable to organized begging. Boys and girls of varying age have been taken to Thailand by their parents, a relative or an acquaintance to beg in the streets of Bangkok and other urban cities. Some children have been used in illicit drug production and sales.

Those who illegally move children into Thailand find easy entry along its expansive borders with Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar. Around each border crossing point brokers facilitate movement into Thailand, charging migrants a fee for help as well as a "protection fee", which is paid to corrupted authorities. This can easily result in a debt-bondage situation for some migrants.

In addition to the demand from employers seeking to maximize profits with cheap labour, pliant labour, the trafficking of children in and into Thailand prevails due to several enabling factors, including:

- ▶ Uneven social, political and economic development between Thailand and neighbouring countries that prompts migration, both regular and irregular
- ▶ Transnational organized criminal groups
- ▶ Lack of migration management
- ▶ Poor labour inspection, particularly in sectors with the many migrant workers
- ▶ Corruption and failure to enforce existing laws by some individual authorities
- ▶ Lack of citizenship for the hill tribe population.

National responses and commitments

Thailand is committed to eliminating the worst forms of child labour and trafficking of humans. To streamline national efforts to combat trafficking, the National Commission on Child Protection developed a National Plan of Action Against Trafficking of Women and Children (2002–2006), with two sets of memorandum of understanding (MOU) agreements to help with the implementation:

- ▶ Domestic MOUs on assistance for victims of trafficking, which outline the responsibilities of each agency in combating the trafficking of women and children

- ▶ Bilateral MOUs on trafficking of women and children with neighbouring countries. An MOU between Thailand and Lao PDR was signed in 2002 and an MOU between Thailand and Cambodia was signed in 2003; similar MOUs, for China (Yunnan province) and Viet Nam are in process.

The National Plan of Action on the Implementation of ILO Convention No. 182 includes anti-trafficking measures as well. Thailand has gradually strengthened its legal framework to ensure an effective response to child trafficking and the best protection of children's welfare. Existing laws include:

- ▶ Labour Protection Act (1998)
- ▶ Measures in Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Women and Children Act (1997)
- ▶ Child Protection Act (2003)
- ▶ Prostitution Prevention, Suppression Act (1996)
- ▶ Money Laundering Control Act (1999).

A strong partnership between the Government and NGOs is responsible for the country's systematic advancement in child protection. In the rehabilitation process, Thailand has introduced a multidisciplinary approach in the recovery and rehabilitation of child victims of trafficking. The Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, through its Child Protection and Anti-Trafficking of Women and Children Bureaus, is the chief agency working with some national NGOs, such as the Centre for the Protection of Children's Rights (CPCR), as focal points in providing social assistance to trafficking victims. The police department and the National Office of the Attorney General have set up focal units to handle legal recourse for victims. Inter-agency cooperation has been established in selected provinces to ensure better coordinated efforts.

Thailand has ratified a number of relevant international instruments, including:

- ▶ UN CRC: UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)
- ▶ ILO C. No. 182: Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour (1999)
- ▶ ILO C. No. 29: Forced Labour Convention (1930)
- ▶ ILO C. No. 138: Minimum Age convention (1973)

The ILO TICSA Project Response

In 2000, ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (ILO-IPEC) began the TICSA regional project in Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka. The project expanded in 2003 to include Indonesia, Pakistan and Thailand. TICSA has concentrated on expanding the knowledge base on the trafficking situation; building the capacity of government, workers' and employers' organizations and NGOs in the design of anti-trafficking programmes, policy and programme advocacy; and providing direct services to child victims of trafficking.

Within ILO-IPEC the TICSA project in Thailand cooperates mainly with the Mekong Sub-regional Project to Combat Trafficking in Children and Women for Labour Exploitation (TICW).¹ ILO-IPEC partnerships with Thai organizations cover the national and provincial levels and TICSA works with the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security as focal partners.

Because agencies in Thailand are in relatively advanced stages in their action to combat child trafficking, the TICSA partnerships are mainly of a strategic nature. For example, in TICSA Phase II (2003–2006), ILO-IPEC is providing small financial support to the Centre for Protection of Children's Rights (CPCR) to implement its multidisciplinary approach in handling child victims of trafficking. At the same time, the CPCR provides technical assistance to enhance the capacity of other TICSA partner organizations, both in Thailand and other countries. The main areas of work for the TICSA project in Thailand entail the following:

Rehabilitation and reintegration

TICSA has focused on improving rehabilitation and reintegration services for survivors through a comprehensive individualized approach that includes:



School children in Thailand (Photo: ILO/Nick Rain)

- ▶ Direct assistance and services to child victims of trafficking
- ▶ Documentation and promotion of the multidisciplinary approach in child protection and recovery of child victims of trafficking
- ▶ Development of a toolkits for the multidisciplinary model on the recovery of child victims of trafficking

Partner organizations:

Centre for Protection of Children's Rights

¹ For further information visit the TICW project website; www.childtrafficking.net

Policy development and capacity building of partners

- ▶ Recognizing the critical roles of designated shelters for victims of trafficking, the TICSA project has been giving technical assistance to the Bureau of Anti-Trafficking of Women and Children (within the Department of Social Welfare, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security) in creating a Case Information Management System (CIMS) at the Baan Kredtakarn Occupational and Development Centre and the Pak Kred Reception Home for Boys. The CIMS helps facilitate bridging the current gaps between anti-trafficking policies and assistance programmes and the monitoring of service delivery to victims.
- ▶ Organizing regional skills-building workshops for care-providers, focusing on issues and directions for institutional and community-based care and reintegration activities.

Partner organizations: Department of Social Welfare, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, Baan Kredtakarn Occupational and Development Centre, Pak Kred Reception Home for Boys, Centre for Protection of Children's Rights, Development and Education Program for Daughters and Communities

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