Packaging Prevention and Protection

How a comprehensive programme mitigates vulnerabilities to trafficking at source and destination points

The Proven Practice:
A holistic approach that confronts the trafficking phenomenon at each segment of the problem: source, movement and destination with different but simultaneous responses, and emphasizes strategic partnerships with government, labour partners, non-government organizations, migrants and would-be migrants.

Integrated preventive interventions in Viet Nam

The Initial Challenge:
The Vietnamese economy has been booming, which has ignited new relationships between Vietnamese citizens and foreigners as well as the migration of mobile workers to cities where industrial zones have multiplied. The new trends have improved the lives of many Vietnamese but have also led to more favourable conditions for human trafficking and labour exploitation. Most victims of trafficking in Viet Nam involve women and children from rural areas, primarily those with a limited education and those lacking opportunities to access employment and protective information. When the ILO-TICW began in 2000, the term “human trafficking” was a new issue for policy makers in Viet Nam to consider and there was not a National Plan of Action on Combating Trafficking. In addition, the capacity of related agencies and their staff on prevention of trafficking was also limited.

The Response:
Recognizing that to deal with a multi-faceted problem such as trafficking needs a multi-faceted response, the Social Evils Prevention Department (DSEP) of the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) collaborated with the International Labour Organization’s Mekong Sub-Regional Project to Combat Trafficking in Children and Women (ILO-TICW) to...
orchestrate a range of carefully planned, integrated, preventive and protective activities in 14 communities in the three provinces of Quang Ninh, Thanh Hoa and Ho Chi Minh city: Ho Chi Minh is the typical destination of many migrant workers, including children and women from other rural areas; Thanh Hoa and Quang Ninh provinces are considered sending areas, and in some cases also transit areas, for young women and children trafficked, or voluntarily migrating, to urban areas within Viet Nam, including Ho Chi Minh city, but also to China and other countries.

The DSEP understood that ultimate beneficiaries were individuals with different needs, dreams and skills and no single solution could help protect them all: A complex situation requires a comprehensive “package” of services. The project’s integrated activities covered information sharing, capacity building, awareness raising, communication campaigns and direct assistance through employment creation, vocational skills training, education support and micro credit schemes.

THE PROCESS:

In 1997, the Government issued a crucial directive, “Assigning Responsibility for Carrying Out Measures to Prevent the Illegal Sending of Women and Children Abroad” that called for a multisector response, which opened the door for the cooperation with partners, among different departments and down the levels of government. When the ILO-TICW project began in 2000, the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs became the focal point, specifically its Department of Social Evils Prevention. DSEP then designed the following strategy:
Establish a national and local coordinating mechanisms

Project strategies included:

1) Mobilizing multisector agencies and organizations at the village, district and provincial, central levels, including the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, Viet Nam Women's Union, the Ministry of Public Security, the Border Guard Command, the Committee for Population, Families and Children, the Viet Nam Generation of Labour Confederation, the Viet Nam Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Viet Nam Cooperative Alliance and other related agencies. The same process was also carried out at provincial level that included Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (DOLISA); Provincial Women's Union; the Department of Police and Border Soldiers; the Provincial Population, Family and Children Committee; the Department of Culture and Information and the Youth Union.

2) Building a cooperation scheme among the multisector agencies and organizations.

3) Promoting ownership of the project among partners at the provincial level, based on a participatory approach, through the designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating stages to ensure the efficiency and relevance of project activities.

A Project Advisory Committee (PAC) at central level and Project Steering Committees (PSC) at provincial level, consisting of representatives from the relevant agencies, were set up in each province and community. In Ho Chi Minh city, the PSC included representatives from the city's Confederation of Labour (worker's organization) and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (employer's organization). In addition to providing instructions and advice, the PSCs also fostered and managed the following activities:

Build up capacities and skills

PSC members at all levels and information workers, teachers, youth leaders and credit-lending managers received skills training on designing, monitoring, managing and evaluating project activities using participatory processes through workshops, training courses, information-education-communication (IEC) material, discussions, experience sharing and on-the-job training. Discussions also centred on the “trafficking”
definition and prevention issues, which helped with developing appropriate intervention strategies. In Ho Chi Minh, the training also emphasized the need for skills to access and protect migrant workers.

**Share information**
At the start of the project in 2005, a project stakeholders ownership exercise allowed relevant authorities at the central level and in the three provinces to learn of the project strategies and to be engaged in designing the action plans and selected targeted communities. The provincial PSC then finalized the operation, coordination and cooperation scheme among relevant agencies and assigned roles to each partner. In each commune, 30–40 people were recruited to assist in the communication activities and monitor and supervise activities (these became known as “information, education and communication (IEC) workers”). Meetings of the IEC workers and the commune PSC were organized monthly, and meetings of the provincial PSC once every three months to review progress and plan for the next three months.

**Conduct communication campaigns**
Many IEC materials were designed, tested, printed and distributed to target groups. One of the key publications was the Travel Smart–Work Smart: A “smart” guide for migrant workers developed by the ILO-TICW project. To deliver compelling messages about trafficking, the project used the following activities:

- Meetings to launch the campaign on prevention of trafficking in women and children in communes/wards;
- Direct communication or communication integrated into regular meetings of local authorities, women groups and clubs;
- Communication combined with the distribution of leaflets, home counselling, counselling for high-risk groups, potential work migrants;
- One-to-one counselling for individuals at greater risk, their parents and sponsors;
- Encouraging families to sign a commitment to be “traffick–free families”;
- Forums for communication sessions in schools, conducted by students;
- Performances and contests on trafficking to encourage excellence in peer education;
- Case studies about previous victims of trafficking;
Booklets for IEC workers, information posters and large information panels posted in high-traffic areas.

IEC workers in Ho Chi Minh mobilized female migrants workers in the industrial and processing zones to set up “clubs” and collaborated with guesthouse owners to organize communication sessions with them.

Trafficking awareness was also integrated into other communication sessions on gender equality, laws, family planning and HIV prevention.

Provide vocational skills training
The DOLISA, in collaboration with local and external vocational schools/agencies, organized vocational skills training courses for women and children at risk and their families. The commune PSC, hamlet leaders and IEC workers then jointly conducted a needs assessment to help those beneficiaries choose a career suitable to their ability and aspirations. The PSCs also looked for employment opportunities for the trainees. The complementing and innovative mobilization of resources – bank credit or loans from the local banks, the Women’s Union’s credit schemes and other credit sources to support the trainees – was instrumental in enabling trainees to set up in their trade upon graduation.

Provide education support
Under the guidance of the provincial PSC, the commune PSC together with the hamlet leaders, school teachers and the IEC workers conducted home visits to update records of children younger than 15 who dropped out of school or were at risk of doing so. To encourage children to return to school, the project offered each child 400,000 dong (US$25) for equipment, tools and school fees. In addition, the relevant agencies integrated messages on the long-term benefits of education and the link between the lack of education and the risk of trafficking into the financial credit programme, the vocational skills training courses and awareness-raising campaigns.

Provide credit schemes
Financial credit was used to increase income and create employment for at-risk women and children and their families. Targeted beneficiaries were poor, young women with little opportunities to learn a trade, women in the vocational training programme or families of children who were at risk of dropping out of school or had already left. Most recipients were selected on their connection to other project activities. Families of at-risk children and drop-outs received small amounts of capital to help provide stability in their lives, creating positive conditions for children to resume their education.
The amount loaned was about 1 million to 5 million dong (US$60–$300) per person and was usually earmarked for small husbandry plans or other small businesses. Most borrowers had vocational training in their selected venture, including discussion on how to most effectively manage their loan and trafficking issues. The funding and the tracking of loan repayments were based on resources and procedures in the project provinces, typically from the Bank for Social Policies or the Women’s Union’s budget.

OUTCOMES:

- 18 workshops were organized to disseminate trafficking information to 700 officers at all levels of relevant agencies and organizations.
- Over 100 staff of government agencies (central and local) participated in capacity-building workshops on project design, participatory monitoring and evaluation.
- 80,000 leaflets entitled “Do not become a victim of human trafficking due to lack of knowledge,” 70,000 Travel Smart–Work Smart guidebooks with information for migrant workers, 2,000 information posters and 30 large information panels were printed and distributed in the project sites.
- A total of 1,230 young women and children participated and completed vocational skills courses in embroidery, weaving, fish processing, animal husbandry, planting, cooking, hairdressing, dress making, automobile repair, etc.
- More than 3,000 loans given. In addition to the project’s credit fund, other local credit resources were mobilized, such as the Bank for Social Policy, the Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development, Women’s Union’s credit schemes, etc.
LESSONS LEARNED:

- To build a core comprehensive model, it is necessary to consider:
  - Projects should build on models and resources available in provinces
  - Projects should be designed comprehensively and linked to one another
  - Supporting services, such as small credit schemes and vocational training, should be provided alongside awareness-raising activities
  - The capacity of human and financial resources of the provinces should be considered in the design of such projects
  - The vulnerabilities of the migrant workers at destination areas should be well understood in order to have proper interventions.

- In multisector coordination and collaboration, it is crucial to foster local authorities’ support and guidance to help promote the process and ensure quality. At the commune level, allocating specific roles for each sector unit proved to be efficient. At the province level, project success depended largely on the quality and commitment of the overseeing committee; much attention should go into the selection and training of the core team.

- It is important to train a local team of skilled IEC workers to conduct communication activities for community people and the target groups in particular. In the long run, this allows the local authority to be more proactive in organizing activities as well as increase sustainability and enable massive replication of the project model.

- A combination of communication channels work effectively with the community and other target audiences. Communication activities should be combined with various performances to attract peoples’ attention.
Every project should include a detailed plan outlining how and when to share and update information in order to build trust and confidence among all involved parties. This plan should be jointly designed by project partners, while taking into consideration the real-life information needs of each community.

Sector agencies and local authorities should develop programmes to provide occupational-orientation counselling, helping both the general population and project beneficiaries to establish professional development plans and provide training and general support for a long-term investment in a career.

Vocational schools, apprentices, their families and relevant agencies should work with each other to monitor and supervise apprenticeships. The closer these relationships are, the higher the quality of the vocational training. Training goals should be established with trainees.

Supporting children to continue schooling needs proper incentive schemes. In addition to tuition fees and materials for schooling as well as livelihood improvement assistance, it is necessary to increase awareness among children and their families on the benefit of education.