ILO Mekong Sub-Regional Project to Combat Trafficking in Children and Women (TICW)
Sharing Experience and Lessons Learned (SELL) series

SELL-3

Holistic is integrated and integrated is holistic

Background and context

A holistic and integrated approach has been intrinsic to the design of the sub-regional ILO-TICW project, which is addressing a multi-faceted problem (trafficking in children and women). Trafficking has social, cultural, economic, financial, historical, geographical and political dimensions, and all of these had to be taken into account when attempting to establish strategies for prevention, which were tailored to the needs of each of the five countries – Thailand, Lao PDR, Viet Nam, Cambodia and Yunnan province of China. The holistic and integrated approach aims to address trafficking in children and women through these different dimensions. This implies not just programme co-ordination (see SELL-4) but also integrated planning to address a common cause – including improving access to existing services and targeting communities as a whole rather than specific at risk groups.

An integrated national or provincial plan could look like:

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<tr>
<th>NGOs</th>
<th>MoWomen’s Affairs</th>
<th>MoEducation</th>
<th>MoLabour</th>
<th>Chamber of Commerce</th>
<th>Trade Unions</th>
<th>Other Ministries</th>
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<td>Anti-trafficking activities</td>
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The exploitation of children and women (usually the most vulnerable and powerless members of society) has a long history in Southeast Asia, both internally and cross-border, and research and consultations were undertaken at the start to learn about this history, as well as its political and geographical underpinnings today. Attitudes also vary according to different social and cultural perspectives, and these were also studied within and among countries. Person trafficking is said to be more lucrative today than drug trafficking, so the understanding of the economic and financial aspects has also been a vital element.

Most of these investigations took place and were linked up during the early stages of developing the project design, though a learning process has continued as more and more detailed information has been gathered about trafficking mainly from its victims and those caring for them. Because trafficking presents such a variety of issues and problems, many and varied persons and institutions, both governmental and non-governmental, have become involved in the different country projects, all bringing their special interest, expertise and influence. Most have continued their involvement in different ways, and remain as a wide-ranging network, which supports and advocates for the prevention of trafficking.

Implementation

The sub-regional project design was developed over two years through the sub-regional office in Bangkok in 1998-1999 – prior to the start of phase 1 of the project. Early consultations took place with international organisations having direct or related expertise 1, particularly those with activities in the target countries. Relevant government agencies were consulted (Social Welfare, Education, Youth ministries, mass Women’s or Youth organisations) as well as national and international NGOs. Once national project offices were set up, most of these organisations became active and committed partners of the project.
In Yunnan Province of China, the project worked from the start with relevant Provincial departments, including 11 Government Bureaus and several social organizations, to build a holistic approach to trafficking prevention in the target Prefectures, Counties and Townships. These efforts included building a common understanding and ownership of the issue of trafficking amongst the key stakeholders through various seminars and meetings; integrated planning from many perspectives (using the Objective Oriented Project Planning [OOPP] technique); targeting communities as a whole rather than specific at risk target groups; building partnerships between agencies and undertaking joint project interventions; improving access to existing services (health, communications etc); and promotion of contributions by all stakeholders.

Thus, various responsibilities were assigned to the different government bureaus in support of the TICW project. The Education Bureau is responsible for legal literacy, gender equality and awareness raising; the Agriculture Bureau for skills training and revolving fund management; the Labour Bureau for employment guidance and legal labour migration; the Statistics Bureau for baseline data collection and analysis; the Public Security Bureau for researching the “demand side” and rescuing trafficked women and children; the Justice Bureau for legal publicity and prevention awareness in villages; the Civil Affairs Bureau for assisting poor farmers and rehabilitation of rescued women and children; the Health Bureau for advocacy about HIV/AIDS/STD prevention; the All China Women’s Federation for women’s awareness raising.

This is an example of how an integrated and holistic approach within the government sector can engage a wide range of departments, which are then able to contribute in specialised ways to prevention activities.

In Cambodia, the Healthcare Centre for Children (HCC), a national NGO which is participating in the TICW project, has formed a network of 316 village organisers in 3 selected communes of one province. The organisers are village leaders, teachers, nurses, and community workers, who have been trained in awareness raising to combat trafficking. They have identified community problems and needs and shared the information with local authorities and NGOs. They continue to provide regular awareness raising to villagers, monitor trafficking issues (reporting to commune leaders, the district office and HCC).

HCC has taken a holistic approach in organising its work to combat TICW by working with all relevant government and non-government agencies in its target areas. Its wide range of activities include the development of multi-media campaign materials, awareness raising (AR) training workshops for key people (community leaders and officials), AR for children and parents, strategies to help eliminate commercial sexual exploitation of children and women, direct assistance to at-risk rural families, (including rural skills training, health education and medical treatment), rescue and legal assistance, and rehabilitation and reintegration of victims of trafficking.

In Lao PDR many organizations are now working to combat TICW. Being a small country and a relatively small GO, NGO and donor community, it is relatively easy to promote coordination and a common understanding of the National Action Plan to combat TICW. The project’s collaboration with these organisations is reinforcing the fight against TICW in a holistic way, and future expansion to other areas should not present unexpected problems.

The authorities in Lao PDR have shown commitment to the project and to fighting trafficking, and this has resulted in additional (financial) support. Efforts - by NPC, NSC, and other project members - will continue to generate financial and technical support (topping up the village development funds), to mobilise varied technical know-how in relevant areas for the benefit of target villagers (e.g. link up with FAO project on Integrated Pest Management), to improve target group access to existing services, and to improve linkages among agencies.

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1. International Office for Migration (IOM), UNHCR, UNAIDS, UNICEF, SCF etc
In Viet Nam’s Quang Ninh Province, after receiving training by the project on data collection, OOPP, and participatory monitoring, target communities have developed their first integrated community development plans for 2002-2003. The plans have been developed with the active participation of the families at risk and were written by a task group of representatives and government officials present in the commune and part of the project’s commune steering committee.

**Achievements**

In **Yunnan**, the achievements to date of a holistic and integrated preventive approach to combating TICW include:

- **Recognition that trafficking in children and women is a complex problem that requires a multi-disciplinary response**

  The Provincial Project Steering Committee of Yunnan Province reached a unanimous agreement that “it is indeed easier to take a preventative injection than to build a hospital”. In other words the ILO-TICW Project’s approach to solve the problem of trafficking by addressing its root causes in a comprehensive way makes sense. Trafficking prevention is more than law enforcement, and can best be achieved by a joint effort by the whole society than by the efforts of only one Ministry.

- **The development of holistic prevention plans in target Counties, and the possibility of up-scaling to Prefecture and Provincial level**

  To contribute to the development of integrated and holistic approaches to combat trafficking, training was provided to key stakeholders from target Township, County, Prefecture and Provincial level under the participatory Objective Oriented Project Planning (OOPP) approach. By discussing problems and possible solutions, the diverse participants came to a mutual understanding of each other’s points of view. Once some form of consensus was reached, these problems were organised into a logical sequence and translated into a comprehensive Project Planning Matrix, where roles and responsibilities of the different actors were laid out.

  The County Trafficking Prevention Plans, which were subsequently developed, include an awareness raising strategy to promote understanding of trafficking prevention; the training of resource persons on holistic approaches; continued collection of baseline data and analysis of population dynamics and behavior; continued collaboration at three levels (Provincial, Prefecture and County) to prevent trafficking by mobilising available resources to improve conditions and create employment opportunities for villagers; the replication of project experience in the County, cooperation among relevant departments and comprehensive management networks and prevention mechanisms.

In Viet Nam, a holistic approach has been used in data collection and baseline development from the start and this has successfully engaged officials for political commitment. The project is capitalising on the existing structure and system, but making it function better by bringing the national and local level together through an intermediary structure: capacity building at mid-level, offering practical tools such as Technical Intervention Area notes (TIAs), mechanisms for vertical communication, and lessons from other participating countries.

Before the project, TICW was considered as being ‘sexual exploitation’ and ‘cross-border’. Now it is realised there are many other types of labour exploitation, which includes internal trafficking. Now the partners can think more broadly, beyond brothel raids and reintegration, and in terms of prevention as well.

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2 AusAid, SCF UK, UNDP, UN-IAP, UNDCP, UNICEF, UNESCO, IOM, WB, ADB, JICA etc.
- **Effective/impact**
  The impact of the inter-departmental approach in **Yunnan** is that trafficking prevention has become a new focus of County governments, with the likelihood that prefectures and provincial governments will follow. County Trafficking Prevention Plans for women and children have been developed, including a strategy to promote understanding about trafficking, collection of baseline data and population dynamics, collaboration at three levels (province, prefecture and county), and management and cooperation networks.

- **Sustainability**
  In **Yunnan**, the system can continue because the government structures are established to stay, and are usually identical in each area. The bureaus have integrated the issue of trafficking into their ongoing range of activities, and this responsibility is expected to be adopted at all geographical levels. In addition, the project is pushing for inclusion of the trafficking issue, together with gender equality, to be included in the national curriculum, which will also promote its sustainability.

In **Cambodia**, the activity is sustainable because it is being conducted by local people in their own communities. The mechanism has been established to ensure sustainability through linking from grassroots to district level. In addition, there is peer awareness raising, where one friend informs another about trafficking, and this is also found to be a sustainable and effective way of spreading the message through informal friendship networks.

- **Relevance/responsiveness**
  The integrated and holistic approaches described above, with Yunnan province and Cambodia as examples, appear to have affected local knowledge and attitudes towards trafficking such that trafficking would no longer be acceptable in these communities.

When the TICW-project started most ongoing interventions at that time focused on rescue, return and reintegration. Little attention was being paid to the root causes of trafficking. The project’s emphasis on prevention, though not a novelty, is considered to be responsive to needs felt at grassroots level where people want ‘jobs’.

- **Efficiency**
  Joint planning efforts among agencies (in particular in China) has resulted in shared responsibilities, complementary interventions, and lower funding needs per agency.
Lessons learned

- Awareness raising alone, without direct assistance and capacity building, is not sufficient in stopping unregistered migration and trafficking. Indications are clear that the holistic three pronged approach used by the project has a better chance of success in helping prevent trafficking.

- Although it is understood that a holistic set of preventive interventions needs to be complemented by initiatives that address the demand-side, this remains a challenge. Powerful interests appear to be at stake, which are sensitive and difficult to tackle given current income disparities between rich and poor within the sub-region, and limited responsiveness of centralised bureaucracies.

- In Yunnan province, it was learned that relevant departments should cooperate with each other from the start in order to reach a unanimous understanding about trafficking that can be replicated elsewhere.
  ✓ Integrating gender equality and trafficking prevention awareness raising into agricultural training increases opportunities for raising awareness to the whole community.
  ✓ Inserting gender equality and trafficking prevention into the school curriculum of young children is effective.

In Cambodia, some other lessons have been learned:

- Illiteracy and minimal education make progress difficult with some parents. They are often not keen to participate.

- A poorly resourced government engaging in multiple donor-led activities can be prevented from working to put plans into action by the number of meetings and capacity building workshops they are expected to attend.

Conditions for replicability

A holistic and integrated approach has been used (with variations) in all TICW country projects. This has been encouraged by the sub-regional ILO-TICW office from the start, and exchange of experience and support for it has been provided through regular regional meetings of National Project Coordinators and key stakeholders.

Some conditions for replication of this experience include:

- Government funding for trafficking prevention. Support of key government agencies and others for broad replication of successful project interventions.
- Need for the Government (at Provincial level or elsewhere) to mainstream trafficking in children and women into their Five Year Plans for Women and Children’s Development, and to commit budgets.
- High quality data available and updated regularly on the trafficking situation and its root causes.
- Appropriate holistic planning techniques available and used (OOPP for example).
- Appropriate support structures should be put into place, such as Steering Committees and Working Committees, a help-desk, and mutual support networks of trainees.

References

A Preventive & Holistic Approach to Combating Trafficking, GP 1, ILO-TICW, Kunming.

Project management manual (MAMA) (TIA-A).

Participatory and action-oriented research (TIA-C) (forthcoming).

Participatory Project Design (TIA-D).

Participatory monitoring (TIA-E).


For detailed information on the TICW project see: www.ilo.org/asia/child/trafficking

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