

Meeting the Challenge

Proven Practices for Human Trafficking Prevention
in the Greater Mekong Sub-region

International Labour Organization

CHINA

MAINSTREAMING PREVENTION

How a work plan became a mainstreamed
instrument to protect children and women

THE PROVEN PRACTICE:

A well-coordinated and multisector provincial work plan for influencing policy, mainstreaming trafficking prevention, pooling resources and generally pursuing meaningful action.

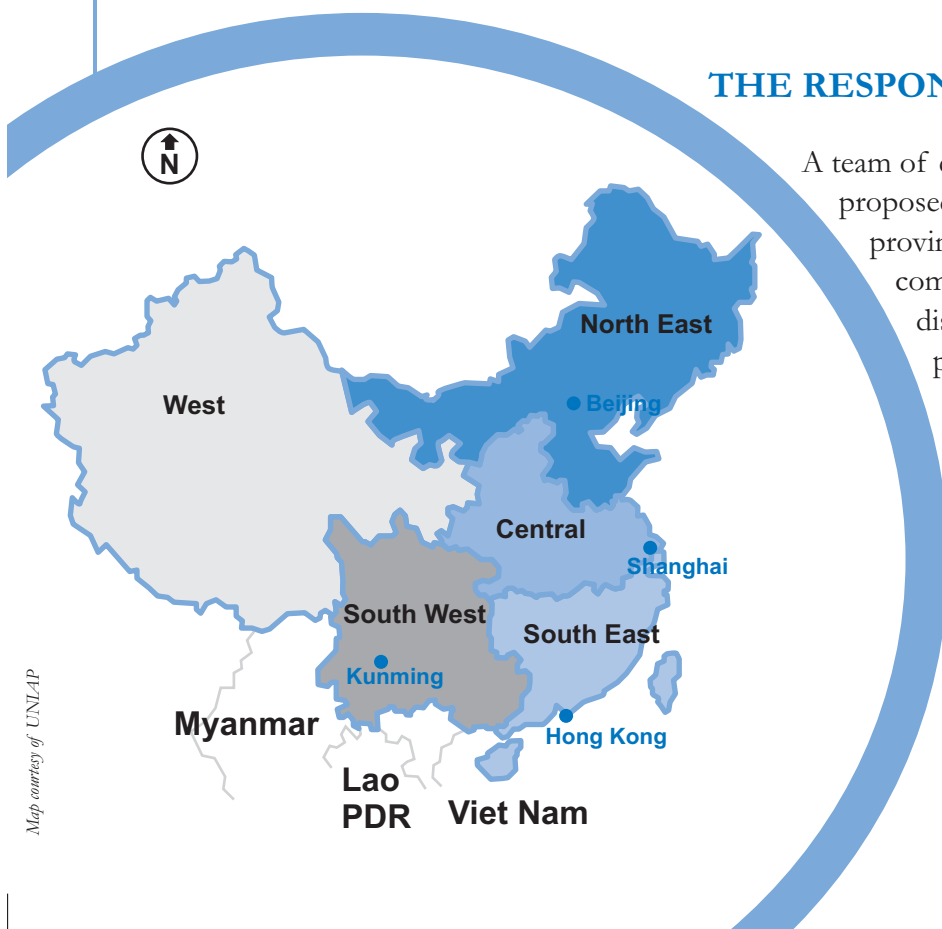
Holistic plan to prevent trafficking in Yunnan province, China

THE INITIAL CHALLENGE:

When the International Labour Organization introduced its Mekong Sub-regional Project to Combat Trafficking in Children and Women for Labour Exploitation (ILO-TICW) in 2002, it first sensitized the project's implementing partner, the Yunnan Provincial Women's Federation, and provincial government officials on the many dimensions of the problem. The provincial authorities then prioritized the pursuit of criminals and the rescue of children and women. But as the market economy further developed, new problems of social management emerged. The Women's Federation realized that a wide-ranging, coordinated response was needed. They also knew that real change requires policy support, and policy needs government officials to both understand the issue and commit to making a difference.

THE RESPONSE:

A team of experts first drafted a proposed plan and then the provincial project steering committee debated and discussed the fine points to produce a strong guiding instrument for trafficking preventing. The "holistic work plan" was presented to the provincial government as the framework to guide and coordinate policy,



Map courtesy of UNLAP





Yunnan Women Safe Migration - this is a photo of our partner from the Yunn Provincial Women's Federation distributing anti-trafficking materials to young migrant women in Kunming City.

administration, education services, law enforcement and other relevant inputs from Party committees and government departments to control the overall situation and suppress the momentum of trafficking crimes, protect the legal rights of children and women and create a safe, stable and harmonious social environment for economic development and for people to live and work decently.

THE PROCESS:

At the beginning of the ILO-TICW project's first phase, the Women's Federation created a provincial project steering committee with 12 members from all relevant government departments. This included education, labour, agriculture and social security. (In the project's second phase, two more crucial partners joined the steering committee: the Kunming City Railway Bureau and the Yunnan Provincial Industrial and Commerce Federation, an employers' organization.) To make sure the committee was taken seriously, the Women's Federation strategically designated a key provincial officer, who had political and legislative leverage, to lead the project. The president of the Provincial Women's Federation became the vice director.

Once the provincial committee was set up, a similar committee with department counterparts was established at the county, city and prefecture levels of the two project sites. Starting with a sensitizing on the issue of trafficking and its negative impacts and then regular meetings, committee members developed a thorough understanding of the complexities and a common understanding to prevention.

The provincial government then created two “expert teams”: one on labour migration (end 2003) and the other on the demand side of the trafficking problem (early 2004) with representative from workers’ and employers’ organizations). The teams conducted research and offered technical support to and suggestions about activities (initiated in the ILO-TICW project’s first phase) that covered microfinance; agricultural skills training; awareness raising on migration risks, the trafficking phenomenon, labour rights and legal protections among migrants and would-be migrants; and prevention training with government department officials and staff and other relevant agencies.

At the beginning of the second phase in 2004, the committee members analysed project work, future challenges and the progress of combined institutional functions. Then three “experts” from the Provincial Women’s Federation, Provincial Justice Bureau and the Provincial Comprehensive Management Office drafted a long-term policy/work plan for overall anti-trafficking activities, with roles specified for each department. This work plan was presented to the provincial project committee for discussion.

The experts then took those discussion points and developed a draft proposal on further direction of the prevention efforts, in a paper entitled, “Recommendations to Improve the Work to Prevent and Combat Trafficking Crime in Children and Women”. The provincial committee members debated the suggestions, and the paper was amended to reflect that discussion. A final “holistic work plan” was then submitted to the provincial government in 2005.

The work plan stresses the government’s roles in preventing and combating trafficking and necessary local financial input. It indicates the importance of both prevention and combating efforts and for institutional coordination. The Yunnan Provincial Comprehensive Management Office then issued the holistic plan to all government departments for implementation throughout the province.

Key to the mainstreaming success of the work plan has been building the capacities of partner agencies through the strengthening of structures, training of project staff and developing policies. The project has relied on department staff and beneficiaries (target groups) in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of activities. Different departments of Yunnan’s provincial government now provide greater levels of assistance to prevent trafficking:



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- The Provincial Finance Bureau increased the funding for projects at the grassroots level, in addition to its initial budget allocation. In response, finance bureaus at the county, city and prefecture levels have also increased their financial support.
- The Provincial Education Bureau offered assistance for its branches carrying out the action programme: They issued favourable policies for cutting down or exempting school costs for children who are poor and for the addition of trafficking prevention to the school curriculum. They also organized participatory education training for teachers and education department officials of the four project counties. The Kunming City Education Bureau assisted in the publishing of two handbooks on prevention: *Handbook on Preventing Trafficking in Women and Children* and *Handbook of Safe Employment* for migrants, with the text written by labour migration experts.
- The Provincial Public Security Bureau stepped up the rescue of trafficked victims and pushed for severe punishment of perpetrators. In 2004, the Bureau issued clear guidance on the regulations and responsibilities of security offices, which served to regulate and systematize anti-trafficking efforts. The Bureau organized specialized teams to combat trafficking and worked with the departments of railway, civil aviation and traffic security to enforce its efforts.
- The Provincial Justice Bureau provided guidance to institutions providing rural young women with knowledge on protection and labour laws.
- The Provincial Labour and Social Security Bureau worked with the

Provincial Agriculture Bureau to provide awareness raising on trafficking and safe employment, including the production of videos and print materials, and has worked to improve the networking for labour migration between sending and receiving areas.

- The Provincial Women's Federation has mainstreamed the anti-trafficking policies and developing strong protection networks within villages.

At the city level, the Simao City Project Steering Committee asked the government to accept and enforce the prevention and combating policies during its planning procedures for women's and children's development.



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The other steering committees at the city and prefecture levels also drafted their own “holistic plan” for addressing the trafficking problem in their jurisdiction. They talked over alternative solutions, specific responsibilities and how to promote the effective involvement of all members.

All partners within the project (from government departments and nongovernment groups) have established an information-sharing network with 20 members. Communication works well between all project steering committees and between villages, townships, counties/districts, cities/prefectures and the provincial level.

“The follow-up work of the programme is to replicate the good working experiences and make sure the continuous development protects the rights and interests of children and women,” said Hu Youlan, the President of Yunnan Provincial Women’s Federation.



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OUTCOMES:

- A government policy paper entitled “Suggestions for Further Efforts to Prevent and Combat Trafficking in Children and Women” has been produced and distributed as a starting point for anti-trafficking planning. The paper stresses the government’s leadership role in preventing and combating trafficking and the importance of institutional coordination.
- 48 leaders from every key government department received training on trafficking definition and prevention.
- Governments at all levels make use of in-house resources, both financial and human.
- A research report by the expert team on the demand side and workers’ and employers’ organizations was produced.
- The leaflet “Prevent Trafficking in Women and Children – Challenge of the Mekong River” was locally adapted and distributed.
- 150,000 copies of a *Handbook on Preventing Trafficking in Women and Children* were printed, with pictures painted by children, through assistance from the Kunming City Education Bureau.



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- 100,000 copies of a *Handbook of Safe Employment* were printed, also with pictures painted by children and with assistance from the Kunming City Education Bureau.

Through project review and documentation within the information-sharing network, each partner presented their experiences and good practices. Ten of the good practices were then selected and produced in a document (2,000 copies) that was distributed to relevant departments.

The Kunming City Private Economy Association, an employers' group, trained all its members on trafficking prevention and good employment practices and has integrated trafficking prevention into their mandate.

The popular newspapers of *Chinese Women*, *Yunnan Daily* and *Yunnan Information Paper* produced several report on trafficking prevention. The Yunnan People's Broadcasting Radio Station committed to playing on a daily basis a public service announcement provided by the ILO-TICW project to raise awareness among the public on the risks of migration and trafficking.

"The project has been helpful for the development of minority ethnic children and women in remote areas," according to Meng Sutie, Secretary of Yunnan Provincial Political and Legislative Committee and Director of the Provincial

Steering Committee. The programme will finish in 2008, but the work of anti-trafficking will not be stopped, The Provincial Steering Committee and the provincial government will continue supporting the work of the Women's Federation and other related departments and contribute to the consolidation of programme achievements, replication of experiences and the establishment of harmonious society.”

LESSONS LEARNED:

- Government support is fundamental for mainstreaming anti-trafficking efforts and to ensure the replication of project achievements and the long-term working mechanism of prevention. To mainstream these efforts, all levels of government must develop ownership of the work and be given support, particularly in terms of individual officials' time to get involved in meetings and trainings. Because of the policy advocacy, governments gradually shifted their focus from law enforcement and the rescue and rehabilitation of victims to prevention efforts. Emphasis on both sides of the problem effectively facilitates the process of trafficking prevention.
- Project ownership among all relevant government departments greatly ensures the project's sustainability.



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