

Meeting the Challenge

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

International Labour Organization

CHINA

PLANTING SEEDS OF SECURITY

How new agriculture skills protect children

THE PROVEN PRACTICE:

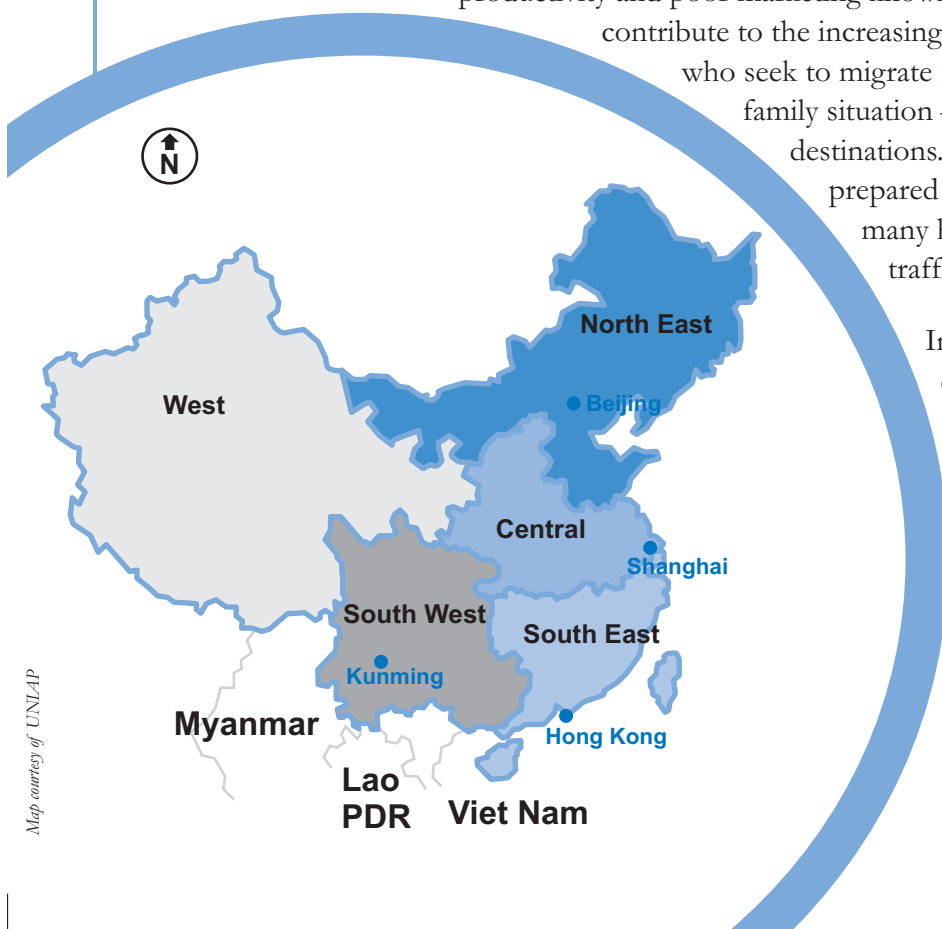
“Packaging” prevention by providing agriculture skills, marketing training and revolving fund loans, along with awareness on migration risks and trafficking and gender equality issues, to improve productivity, family income and improved living conditions; this holistic grouping of activities helps parents to keep their children in school and ultimately reduces their risk of being trafficked or exploited. The project has also built a mutual-support network of farmers to pass on training skills to neighbouring villagers.

Increasing farmers’ productivity in Yunnan province, China

THE INITIAL CHALLENGE:

Yunnan province in southern China borders Lao PDR and Viet Nam. It is largely an agricultural province, with many ethnic minorities and much poverty. Illiteracy in several areas of the province is higher than the provincial and national levels, and some counties have a large number of school drop-outs. Natural conditions are somewhat inferior for production and farmers tend to have low levels of education and lacks advanced farming skills, resulting in low productivity and poor marketing knowledge. All these factors contribute to the increasing numbers of young people who seek to migrate for employment to help the family situation – including to unknown destinations. Poorly educated, poorly prepared and eager to earn money, many have been exploited and trafficked.

In Yunnan’s Simao City, for example, an estimated 8,700 women and children migrated out from 1995 to 2002. During that period, 320 women and 19 children who had been trafficked were rescued and 89 traffickers were arrested.



Map courtesy of UNLAP





THE RESPONSE:

The International Labour Organization's Mekong Sub-regional Project to Combat Trafficking in Children and Women (ILO-TICW), targeted one county (Ximeng) in Simao City and two in Honghe Prefecture (Yuanyang and Jinping), home to many ethnic minority groups, as pilot sites for agriculture skills training and advocacy education on trafficking prevention, health care, laws and gender equality.

Members of the Women's Federations, various agriculture bureaus and village representatives collaborated in an advisory group to oversee the activities and provide technical support, human resources, training venues and transportation for trainees.

THE PROCESS: Once the advisory group was in place, the next step entailed a two-day training course (in 2004) for 169 key leaders in various agriculture departments from counties within and beyond the project sites (46 from nine counties in Simao City and 123 from Honghe Prefecture) and focused on issues related to the prevention of human trafficking, such as labour migration, the labour laws and gender equality issues. The objective aimed to win their support for improving the quality of service to the targeted groups of farming families.

With the support of department heads as a result of the initial training, extension workers within the agriculture bureaus at county, prefecture and city levels evaluated the natural, social and economic environments in the three pilot counties through discussions with villagers, including children. Using questionnaires, they then determined the level of relevant skills of villagers and thus identified the categories of crop and animal husbandry they might pursue. They also discussed with the villager how to offer better skills training for improving productivity, relying on the Government's Three Years' Action Plan of Poverty Alleviation.

The extension workers then evaluated the local markets to identify the value of agriculture products and opportunity for further development. The agriculture bureaus asked experienced experts to edit training materials to make them more practical, effective, user-friendly and easy to understand. Deviating from traditional training courses that were pinned to speeches by trainers, these courses used vivid multi-media, such as computer-generated instructional pictures projected onto a screen, and provided trainees with brochures in local languages.

Training courses were set up within communities over a seven-month period in 2005 and included adult and child members of ethnic minority groups. Topics covered understanding the markets, the importance of customers and the necessity of quality products that can meet the needs of customers and markets. Skills training applied to the planting of eugenic glebe paddy rice (upland rice, which grows in dry land), millet buckwheat, bananas, rapeseed, tapioca, tea bushes, fish culture in rice fields and pig raising. The training also included human trafficking-prevention issues.

Upon completion of the pig-raising course, trainees were provided with good-quality piglets. Certain households were picked to demonstrate the benefits of new skills in planting and animal husbandry and were included in the test of a revolving fund including 34 families in Yuanyang county and 50 in Jinping county. Funds could be borrowed for use in developing aquaculture and pig, chicken and cattle raising; crop expansion, including vegetables, bananas or mangos; or setting up a small business, such as machining, selling clothes or mixed items, or a barbershop. The selected households were provided revolving-fund support of 600–2,000 RMB (US\$82–\$273) each.



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At the same time, members of the Women's Federations talked about human trafficking issues and its prevention at meetings with the targeted communities and through the media to inform the general population of the risks associated with migration and the importance of keeping children in school for their self-protection. Also, staff within the agriculture and education bureaus included trafficking prevention and gender equality in trainings they conducted with villagers, teachers and students.

Once the farmers started planting or running a small business, the various specialists (usually the agriculture extension workers) followed up with them to help with any arising problems

and to document their results in order to show the impact on trafficking prevention.

The activities were then documented for replication in other counties. Farmers who have received the training were also encouraged to pass on the information to other farmers in their villages, particularly those who came forward wanting to learn the new skills, and to operate as a network of mutual support with adjusting to the techniques and coping with various agriculture-related problems.

OUTCOMES:

- In total, the project provided 10,839 adults and children in the three counties with skills training to improve their farming productivity. In Ximeng county in Simao City, this was 2,032 more than expected (for a total of 8,232 trainees. In Yuanyuang and Jinping counties in Honghe Prefecture, the 2,607 trainees for new skills included 1,306 children, 450 women and 440 men, representing a total of 455 households.
- 169 key leaders of agricultural departments received training on the importance of uplifting the skills of impoverished farmers and making them aware of the dangers of trafficking.
- 84 households received revolving-fund support (in Honghe Prefecture only).

- The improved skills and provision of pigs and revolving-fund support resulted in stable food production and increase of per capita food hold in the targeted sites as well as a higher productivity of pigs and an increase in the farmers' per capita net income. According to the final output report of the Honghe Prefecture Agriculture Bureau, the farmers increased their income on average (per capita) by 100 RMB in Jinping county and 368 RMB in Yuanyang county, which was regarded as helping to prevent the migration of young people. In one project township of Ximeng county in Simao City, the per capita income increase was 68 RMB, which was 42 RMB more than in households in non-project sites; as a result, the per capita food hold was 45 kg (32 kg more than in non-project sites) and household income increased by 182 RMB (152 RMB more than in non-project sites).
- Per area production value increase among farmers who planted tea bushes in Simao City was 560 RMB, which was 360 RMB more than the non-project sites. Farmers' income increased per area was 74 RMB. The sale price of dry tea was 7 RMB more than that in 2004. The productivity in the first half of 2005 from pig raising nearly doubled over that in 2004: from 77,460 kg to 146,940 kg. The production value increased from 1,032,800 RMB to 1,959,200 RMB.
- Children's school enrolment ratio increased and the drop-out ratio decreased in the project sites: The baseline survey reported that the targeted villages' average enrolment ratio was 99.5% in 2005, an increase of 0.85% from 2004. The average drop-out ratio at 1% was 0.1% lower than in 2004. No girls dropped out of school in 2005, which was a 1.04% improvement from the previous year.
- 12,000 training brochures, 5,000 handouts and 1,000 advocacy leaflets were printed and disseminated in the targeted communities.

The trafficking awareness led to a change of attitude among people, from regarding prevention as the responsibility the public security departments and Women's Federations to realizing the need for local efforts from all sorts of individuals and authorities.

Governments at all levels have agreed on the necessity for similar training sessions for farmers, especially those in poor border areas.

Using baseline data in the three project sites, there appears to be a decrease of "blind" labour migration (i.e. migration without a known end-destination and/or employer) in 2005: 29 persons left home for work (17 males and 12 females) from the four villages, whereas 91 persons migrated from two control villages (51 males and 39 females). No trafficking crimes were reported in the target villages, while 20 persons were reported trafficked from the control villages.



The agriculture departments have pledged to promote regular labour migration of rural surplus labourers and help decrease blind migration through increased training of villagers. The training sessions have attracted people from neighbouring villages who want similar activities.

The agriculture skills training helped the targeted groups realize the importance of science and changing traditional conceptions of farming in order to increase their income. The project changed backward extensive production methods of cultivating large areas with inefficient outputs. The approach of mixing eugenic species helped increase products per unit area and to improve crop production and the average consumption per capita. The project also helped promote the use of other crops, such as tea, rubber or millet buckwheat, that could help sustain the economic development.

“Before 2005, we seldom raised pigs or chickens, and we grew only grains. I never attended any agriculture training. Every year we had an income of 600–800 RMB. Life was difficult,” explained Yan Gong, a father of two girls in Yimeng county. His family participated in the pilot project to learn new skills. “They gave us tiles and five bags of cement. Along with our stones and wood, we built a pig sty. They also gave us three piglets (linked with a government poverty-reduction programme) and told me the income from the first pig sold would pay off the cost of the three piglets and then the second income would be mine. Six months later, we sold one pig, paid for the three piglets and bought another seven pigs. I sold them in January 2006. We harvested paddy rice in September 2005 and then planted three mu of rapeseeds. The total income from the pigs and rapeseed was 4,805 RMB (US\$581), which we used to buy commodities, such as cigarettes, liquor and washing powder, to sell in a newly built small shop in our home. Every month we earn 200 RMB. We have

more money and life is better. We will never worry about school costs, so our kids can enjoy their studies,” he said.

ONGOING CHALLENGES:

- Trainings need to take place during the planting seasons to maximize productivity.
- Despite initial training by the Women’s Federation, the trainers, who are of an agricultural background, lack in-depth knowledge on trafficking prevention and gender equality. While there is cooperation and communication with other departments, it needs to be more institutionalized and thus more regular.



- More political and financial supports, such as the provision of the revolving fund, are needed to assist resource-strapped farmers in carrying out the changes that the training advocates.

LESSONS LEARNED:

- In order to have an impact on trafficking, agriculture skills training have to be done together with a package of other services including information on channels for safe migration.
- The awareness training of leaders of agriculture departments improved their understanding of the significance of trafficking prevention. As a result, they strengthened the administration support with extra staff to help with the trainings and other in-kind input to the project.
- Market analysis was of vital importance in identifying the training content. Farmers' interests and market analysis are critical elements to successful training projects as is the evaluation of existing skill levels, analysis of local social, economic and agricultural (climate, soil character, water supply and infrastructure) and forecasts on the future of natural resource exploitation.
- The improved training facilities with multimedia presentations were more attractive than traditional training approaches. The vivid pictures enhanced the training quality. In ethnic minority areas, field trainings should be given in local languages and the materials should be arranged by ethnic minority staff of agriculture bureaus.
- The impact created by the sample households was stable and enduring. Careful selection of sample households pays off and selection criteria should include farmers' enthusiasm, education and ability to grasp new skills.
- The economic profits of direct assistance programmes can be even greater with the assistance of production skills, productive materials and after-production services, such as marketing and how to get easy and direct access to buyers/consumers (and thus avoid middle persons and gain more profit share for farmers).



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