



INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION

INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME ON THE ELIMINATION OF CHILD LABOUR

Mekong Sub-Regional Project to Combat Trafficking in Children and Women

United Nations Service Building, 2nd Floor, Rajdamnern Nok Avenue, P.O. Box 2-349,
Bangkok, 10200, Thailand, Telephone: (+66-2) 288-2218, Fax: (+66 2) 288-3063

www.ilo.org/asia/child/trafficking

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Avenues For Action: Engaging Workers' and Employers Organizations to Combat Trafficking in Children and Women

Precursor:

*The ILO's unique **tripartite structure** empowers effective cooperation between governments, workers, and employers in the effort to combat trafficking in children and women. The underlying advantage rests in the potential to address trafficking at international, national, provincial, and local levels. To date, **engaging with Workers' and Employers' organizations** (W&Es) has been one of the most challenging aspects of the campaign, since a majority of trafficking occurs in the unregulated **informal economy**¹ where little organization exists among workers and employers and where labour standards are not well established, monitored and enforced. ILO-IPEC finds these challenges particularly pressing as these organizations remain critical **partners** alongside **governments, NGOs, and academic leaders** in fight against the trafficking and exploitation of children and women.*

The organization of labour becomes increasingly important in an increasingly global economy as trafficking in the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) gains prominence on the international agenda. Understanding of the structure and interests of workers' organizations (WOs) and employers' organizations (EOs) leads to an understanding of their link to trafficking and potential avenues for action.

*With increased analysis of the informal economy in the context of **migration, globalization, poverty, and gender issues**, ILO-IPEC can advocate interventions by WOs and EOs on both sending and receiving ends in the continued fight for decent work and the elimination of trafficking in children and women (TICW).*

1. THE INFORMAL ECONOMY:

Despite predictions to the contrary, the informal economy has grown in most regions of the world in the last two decades. In developing countries, a majority of people (mostly women and children) work in the informal economy. Even in the developed world, a surprising number of people labour in these often unregulated areas of the economy. Analysis of this economy shall include:

(1.1) segmentation in the informal economy;

¹ Fifteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS), January 1993, conceives the informal sector as consisting of production units that "typically operate at a low level of organization, with little or no division between labour and capital... and on a small scale.... Labour relations - where they exist - are based mostly on casual employment, kinship or personal and social relations rather than contractual arrangements with formal guarantees."

- (1.2) scope and size of the economy;
- (1.3) demand side factors and the growth of the informal economy; and
- (1.4) risks and constraints: the informal economy meets the market.

(1.1) Segmentation in the Informal Economy

The informal economy is often conceptualized in three components: **micro-entrepreneurs, self-employed/household enterprises, and independent service sub sector/wage workers**. While it remains challenging to organize labour and gather data from this unregulated dimension of the economy, the TICW project recognizes that trafficking is an ailment of **both formal and informal economy**. Demand of trafficked persons exist in the sectors which provide unfavourable labour conditions such as lower/no wages, benefits, and concern with occupational safety and health (OSH), and where local people will not work.

Trafficking in the **formal economy**² often occurs in the labour -intensive work of the agricultural/fishing industries, construction, manufacturing and processing industries (e.g textile/garment, shoe, food/agricultural products, sweatshops) where there is a high demand of cheap labour and where local people do not work. Both internal and cross-border trafficking within these environments occurs in all five countries of the GMS and represents internal concerns particularly in Cambodia, Thailand, Laos, and China.

Sectors **vulnerable** to trafficking are generally **service and entertainment sectors**, ranging from **domestic work, small and home-based enterprises** (e.g, catering, restaurants, hotels, shops, beauty parlors), to karaoke bars, massage parlors, and sex establishments. In addition, trafficking often involves illicit and organized criminal activities such as drug trafficking and the use of children in begging and street hawking. Internal trafficking remains particularly prevalent in all five GMS countries while trafficking represents a major cross-border concern in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam.³

One of the greatest challenges facing the TICW project lies in engaging workers' and employers' organizations in an informal economy that lacks organization and stronger lines of communication. Addressing trafficking within this ambiguous framework requires further investigation of its characteristics.

(1.2) Scope and Size of the Informal Economy:

The ILO notes that "because of the heterogeneity of the informal economy and its multiple dimensions, conceptual and statistical definitions of this sector are not as clear-cut as one might expect." The currently identifiable scope includes:

In GDP Terms: the informal economy represents 25% to 40% of annual output in the developing countries of Asia and Africa; an estimated **48% of jobs in Thailand**, the central **target for trafficking** in the GMS, hail from this economy (begging, entertainment, household labour, and sex work). With 90% of new urban jobs in Africa and 60% of jobs in Latin America emerging in the informal economy, this trend is increasingly global.

Feminization of Informal Economy: female participation in the informal sectors consistently rose in the 1980s and 1990s in all Asian countries, particularly in service sectors. In Southeast Asia, women account for at least half of the urban informal economy and often labour in the household, entertainment, and sex trades. In developing countries, **30-90%** of street vendors, **35-80%** of all home based workers (including both self-employed and homeowners) and **80%** or more of homeworkers (industrial workers who work at home) are female. Aside from North Africa, over 60% of female workers in developing countries labour in informal sectors.⁴

² Consists of traditional wage-earners who enjoy the protection of wage and labour laws, social security, and employer benefits.

³ TICW Project Workshop, Hanoi 24-28 February 2003.

⁴ GENPROM: Women and Men in the Informal Economy, Geneva 2002.

Includes **Child Labour**: Most child labour in the informal economy is hired or wage labour. 246 million child workers are employed worldwide; **180 million** fall victim to the worst forms of child labour (WFCL) and **8 million** are subject to modern day slavery and sexual exploitation.⁵

Age in the Informal Economy: Contrary to popular assumption, not just the young and the old labour in the informal market; in most Asian cities, nearly 2/3 are of prime working age (22-44). Yet children are perceived to be at the highest risk of exploitation as they normally are more docile and less experienced.

(1.3) Demand Side Factors and Growth of the Informal Economy

Globalization fuels pressure for skilled labour driven by technological advancement and increased demand for cheap labour; more educated participants in the labour market now rely on the informal economy as more stable opportunities in the formal sectors decrease. Though globalization creates vast opportunities, it also creates vast inequality of opportunity, leading to a growing sense of **insecurity** and the **weakened bargaining position of workers**.⁶

The **feminization of migration** represents a growing concern in the GMS, as women and children migrate in response to greater demands for them in the service and sex sectors. The low-skilled/unskilled work force faces legal/policy barriers to migration and increased threats of trafficking and exploitation. (see Section 3 on migration).

The Concentration of Activities in Urban Agglomerations, particularly Asian mega-cities, serves as a "pull factor" in the growth of the informal economy. These activities include increasing practices of subcontracting, piece-rate work, reliance on informal transportation for urban mobility, and an increased demand for tourist services. The urban poor need access to goods and services they can afford (locally produced rather than imported).

(1.4) Risks and Constraints: The Informal Economy Meets the Market

Workers in the informal economy face:

Lack of Access: to capital, or markets/demands for larger orders, to workshops, raw materials, technology, basic education, voice in policymaking activities, and **collective organization**.

Lack of Protection: low incomes, lack of job security, frequent interruption of work and hazardous working conditions lead to ill health, low skill levels, poor quality of work premises and services, and harassment by government officials.

Lack of Attention to Child Labour: In Southeast Asian countries, **children** occupy the bulk of **low paying, hazardous jobs** such as waste picking, casual and domestic labour. An estimated **15 million children** worldwide work to produce items for international trade.⁷ **246 million children** enter the global workforce instead of school. **180 million** are subjected to worst forms of child labour conditions, and **8 million** are victims of modern day slavery and exploitation.⁸

Lack of Legal Protection: informal workers are often excluded from equitable wage standards, social security benefits, and worker benefits held by workers in the formal economy. Furthermore, while skilled professionals often have the option of legal migration, the unskilled/semi-skilled do not; even where legislation does exist, enforcement is weak.

The Increasing Threat of Poverty and unemployment often serves as an impetus for migration and leaves workers vulnerable to traffickers. **160 million** people worldwide are **unemployed**; factoring in the **underemployed**, this figure skyrockets to over **1 billion**. The

⁵ Director General Juan Somavia, Statement, New York, May 2002

⁶ Director General Juan Somavia, *Decent Work for All in a Global Economy*, June 1999.

⁷ International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU 1 July 2003).

⁸ ILO, *Reducing the Decent Work Deficit: A Global Challenge*, Geneva 2001.

feminization of poverty is a pressing concern, as women now constitute **70%** of the world's 1.3 billion absolute poor.⁹

The trafficking problem deepens as **trafficking networks** become increasingly efficient; they are often facilitated by collusion of officials who have become the driving engine of the crisis.

2. ENGAGING WORKERS' AND EMPLOYERS' ORGANIZATIONS

Trafficking highlights the global need for **corporate social responsibility** (CSR) in protecting both **human rights** and **labour rights**. The ILO adopted the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and works to implement the Global Compact launched by the UN Secretary General. Principles upheld include: freedom of association and right to collective bargaining; elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour; effective abolition of child labour; elimination of discrimination with respect to employment and occupation.

Analysis of WOs and EOs shall include:

- (2.1) organizing trade unions: engaging workers' organizations;
- (2.2) the involvement of employers' organizations;
- (2.3) focused policies and actions: engaging workers' and employers' organizations on both sending and receiving ends; and
- (2.4) a tripartite approach: governments and NGOs as catalysts alongside workers and employers.

(2.1) Organizing Trade Unions: Engaging Workers' Organizations

The demand for trafficked labour is almost completely absent in sectors where workers are well unionized and labour standards are well monitored and enforced. One primary goal of the TICW project is thus to model such success in industries on both sending and receiving ends, organizing the informal in addition to the formal economy. Organizing trade unions is not just a movement, but a **method** in the quest for **decent pay and decent work**. Ultimately, trade unions must organize the informal sector if it is to keep its numerical strength.

Since trade unions consist of workers and are led by workers, it is incorrect to assume they are knowledgeable about the issue of trafficking and ILOs efforts to combat TICW. **Capacity building** programs (e.g, training, meetings, information dissemination) should be considered to educate and increase awareness among trade unions about links to trafficking, relevant ILO standards, and potential avenues to combat TICW.

Workers' organizations are **membership** organizations. The primary objective of these trade unions organizations is to **promote and protect their own interests - improving wages and working conditions**. As a source of cheap labour, increased trafficking and child labour contribute to the depression of wages. Thus, trafficking and child labour could undermine the bargaining power of trade unions. Awareness should be raised about the threat trafficking provides to both of these interests.

Legislation Protects the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize: ILO Convention 87 (1948) protects the fundamental right to organize labour. Part I Article 55 states that "Workers' and employers' organizations shall have the right to establish and join federations and confederations and any such organization, federation or confederation shall have the right to affiliate with international organizations of workers and employers." Part I Article 11 maintains "Each member of the ILO for which this convention is in force undertakes to take all necessary and appropriate measures to ensure that workers and employers may exercise freely the right to organize."

Trade Unions must seek to **integrate informal labour** into their **initiatives**, in accordance with ILO Convention 87. Unions should employ **aggressive techniques** in tracking down informal economy workers; tracing a final product down to its most basic unit of production

⁹ GENPROM, 2003.

may identify the otherwise ambiguous informal economy. The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) advises **unions to adopt a sector-based approach** to organizing labour, enabling focused examination of economic relationships and interests by sector.

Promote **female representation** and **informal economy representation** (the two are often correlated) in trade unions. Women currently account for **only one third** of global **trade union membership** and hold **less than 1%** of decision-making positions in such unions.¹⁰

Gender-focused interventions: keeping in mind the high proportion of women harmed by trafficking, solutions at **both national and local levels** should account for the interests of women. Helpful **tools for consultation** include: Women Workers' Rights Toolkit, The Gender Equality and Rights Resource Kit (to combat child labour and trafficking) and SRO-Bangkok's *Promoting Gender Equality in Action against Child Labour and Trafficking: A Practical Guide for Organizations*. GENPROM has also published a helpful Information Guide for Women Migrant Workers.

The **Social Insurance Model** as a form of successive cooperative activity: In Tanzania, the Mwanayamala Cooperative in Dar es Salaam organizes 1,000 market vendors who pay a small daily rate to rent stands; these funds contribute toward providing death and hospital benefits.

Joint action at the national level: trade unions should convene at the country level to ensure integration of the informal economy through a variety of programs: social insurance schemes, savings and credit banks, education projects (e.g. collaboration with **teachers' organizations**¹¹ to promote quality, free basic educations as a means of preventing TICW and child labour), vocational training institutions. Programs should increase joint education and training for staff members.

Joint action at the local level: trade unions centers for informal economy workers could be established to provide a range of on-demand services: information and advice (e.g. education on legal knowledge such as equality wages, labour conditions, and labour law), training, health and safety at work, connection to government services such as social security, and small enterprise development programs.¹² Engage the local **media** via television, radio, and printed materials to further trade union campaigns and increase awareness. These responses should include **child-centered approaches** and consider the **gender component** so relevant to trafficking. **Women and children's voices** should be included in decision making.

Joint action among trade unions increases positive impacts. For instance, the ILO-IPEC funded NUHWRAIN project represents a concerted effort to combat the exploitation of children in the Philippines' tourism industry. Also there are potentials to work with both national and **international/regional** workers' organizations¹³.

Workers' organizations can adopt a **"watchdog" role** in identifying and reporting the incidence of trafficking within their internal organizations and workplace; they can also extend this role to the transportation industry or targets where children are most likely to be trafficked. Organizations should demand that their members engage in **"fair trade"** practices in

¹⁰ GENPROM, Promoting Gender Equality: A Resource Kit for Trade Unions.

¹¹ Including **Education International** (EI) which is a world-wide trade union organisation of education personnel. The Asia and the Pacific regional office of EI is located in Kuala Lumpur.

¹² The Community Service Centers established by the Thai government provide a model of success; they provide social welfare services and help develop living standards in urban areas.

¹³ Such as International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (**ICFTU**), World Confederation of Labour - Brotherhood of Asian Trade Unionists (**WCL-BATU**), World Federation of Trade Unions (**WFTU**), Education International (EI), International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions (**ICEM**), International Federation of Building and Wood Workers (**IFBWW**), International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation (**ITGLWF**), International Union of Food, Agriculture, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Association (**IUF**), World Federation of Agriculture, Food, Hotel and Allied Workers (**WFAFW**), International Federation Textile and Clothing (**IFTC**).

accordance with internationally recognized labour standards. In this manner, companies can establish a reputation for social consciousness and responsibility for labour and human rights practices. They can also be enticed to lend a hand in exposing competitive companies in violation of fair labour standards, as labour exploitation claims can permanently damage a company's international reputation.

(2.2) The Involvement of Employers' Organizations

Employers' organizations work to **promote employers' interests** by lobbying for a more supportive macroeconomic policy and regulatory environment for enterprise development. They also serve as an information resource, providing advice, consulting, information, education, and training to members.

EOs in a market economy are essentially membership organizations of largely individual enterprises. In the transition economies of communist countries, EOs are moving in this direction; however, they still have links with the ruling State structure.

Many EOs focus on labour relations and also deal with various labour market areas usually covered by the ILO.

The EOs acting as ILO social partners are national level organizations. Those in China, Laos, and Vietnam have branches at provincial but not local levels. In Cambodia and Thailand they are purely capital city organizations.

In regards to trafficking:

EOs can be encouraged to lobby for more stringent laws against trafficking, while increasing awareness among their members of the magnitude of the crisis.

EOs can promote **codes of conduct** in relevant industries susceptible to trafficking. For instance, employers in hotel, airline, and tourism industries in Thailand have developed a code of conduct in the fight against child sex tourism. Also, model codes have been developed by trade unions, enterprise associations and others. Below is an example of a basic model code originally developed by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and the International Trade Secretariat (ITS):

(Name of company) and its contractors, their subcontractors, principal suppliers and licensees (franchise holders) involved in the production and/or distribution of products or services for (name of company) shall ensure that **child labour is not used**. There shall be no use of child labour. Only workers above the age of 15 years or above the compulsory school-leaving age, whichever is higher, shall be engaged (ILO Convention 138). Adequate transitional economic assistance and appropriate educational opportunities shall be provided to any replaced workers.¹⁴

The ILO can engage sectoral/industrial level EOs where the national EOs have a limited reach. However, national EOs may be sensitive to the ILO's work with other EOs and would like to be more involved or kept informed of subsequent involvement. Given its tripartite structure the ILO should work with individual employers through EOs.

Given the limited geographical reach of EOs and internal constraints such as money and manpower, it is particularly beneficial for EOs to work with governments, especially local governments and NGOs. This multi-faceted approach is more promising than a single dimension plan.

A series of awareness raising and capacity building tools offer education to EOs:

- ◆ Women Enterprise Development (SIYB)

¹⁴ ACTRAV: Trade Unions and Child Labour, Geneva 2000.

- ◆ Get Ahead Training for Women Entrepreneurs (WEDGE) piloted in TICW Lao PDR, providing business skills to both advanced and elementary women entrepreneurs.
- ◆ GENPROM's Information Guide for Women Migrant Workers
- ◆ ICFTU Gender Equality Promotion Package
- ◆ June 2002, IPEC launched the SCREAM program for socialization and mobilization of the youth against child labour. This effort spreads awareness and tools to the great community of WOs, EOs, and NGOs.

(2.3) Focused Policies and Action

(2.3.1) Efforts by Workers and Employers on Sending and Receiving Ends

Lack of access to information and education remains a fundamental barrier facing the many migrant and native and informal workers vulnerable to trafficking. WOs and EOs can play a critical role by engaging in **enabling** and **capacity building** in both origin and destination states while demanding a rigorous and equitable policy approach. Other focused origin/destination interventions will be discussed in (2.4) in the framework of NGO and government assisted efforts.

When engaging WOs and EOs, it is critical to keep in mind the **gender implications** of both employment and trafficking. **Occupational segregation** exists in both informal and formal sectors of the economy, meaning men and women generally participate in different sectors of the economy, and also different positional categories in the same occupation (e.g, women as factory workers and men as supervisors.) Globally, women earn 20-30% less than men. Thus, **sector-specific approaches** will be more effective in identifying trafficking and implementing focused solutions. When addressing an industry, it is important to keep in mind which workers labour within it.

(2.3.2) Workers and Employers in sending countries should engage in:

Pre-departure Education Campaigns: increasing awareness among workers about the potential dangers of trafficking and common exploitation schemes they are susceptible to as well as the possible measures to seek help/assistance when they face troubles. Workers' and Employers' groups should also promote awareness and education of gender issues in the sub region, particularly the vulnerability women face in the informal labour market. Sending countries could organize a campaign against traffickers recruiting for the sex industry from garment factories, for instance.

Sector-specific education programs for **better working conditions** can protect and enhance the quality of life for many. For instance, employers in entertainment and sex industries should increase awareness of sexually transmitted diseases, HIV testing, mechanisms for health protection, and self-defense skills. These efforts should be met with similar initiatives in receiving countries.

Skills Training Programs: apprenticeship and skill enhancement **by foreign employers** in migration origin areas (preventive measures) coupled with the help of employers in receiving areas participating in pre-departure training.

Securing the **best terms and conditions** of employment, and only charging fees from employers, not migrant workers/informal workers. Ensure that companies comply with **minimum wage** standards. In 2000, 30.1% of all working Thais were not even paid minimum wage¹⁵. Awareness is the first step to enforcement.

(2.3.3) Workers and Employers in receiving countries should engage in:

Establishing and publicizing clear "**codes of conduct**" applicable to both local and migrant workers, and applauding companies that follow best practices and laws. Campaign for broader coverage of the labour law in **informal** sectors as well as organized ones. It should

¹⁵ World Bank, 2000 (based on Royal Thai Government statistics).

not go unnoticed that sectors with the highest percentage of **women** - domestic work and the entertainment industry - are the **least regulated**.

Empowering migrant workers, particularly women (WMW). Important considerations for this include: understanding that domestic work is paid work; educating migrant workers especially women on their rights; educating key stakeholders and seeking their political commitment to address the issues at the structural level; establishing cooperation, dialogues and mediation among key stakeholders; and redefining strategies with a rights-based approach.¹⁶

Developing **clear, equitable labour conditions in accordance with ILO standards**: demand equality of wages and conditions of work **between migrant and local workers** and guarantee legal protection and enforcement of this law.¹⁷

Promoting Legal Literacy: advocating ILO-Convention 87 and addressing workers' freedom to associate. Fewer than 1 in 1,000 migrant workers in Thailand is aware that he or she can join a Thai labour union.

Overcoming the language barrier with necessary **translation and assistance**, as migrant workers often do not have access to information in their native languages.

(2.4) A Tripartite Approach: Governments and NGOs as Catalysts Alongside Workers and Employers

Governments play an integral role in the success of any national or international program, as they provide the legal framework and resources for policy implementation. Likewise, NGOs offer effective examples of capacity building and direct assistance in Asia. As the TICW project seeks to engage WOs and EOs, we must necessarily enlist the aid of **governments and NGOs on both sending and receiving ends** to address trafficking effectively.

Effective **policy** work: negotiate bilateral agreements to regulate the rights of migrant workers (e.g MoU between Thailand and Laos); W&E can lobby governments in receiving countries toward a coherent immigration policy, enforcement of such policy, and effective monitoring of working conditions in sectors with high concentrations of migrant workers. Policy should also advocate protection and decent pay per sector.

Access to **information and resources**: lobby governments to provide free legal services to trafficking victims and their families, addressing the needs of each sector (e.g, reaching out to young women in entertainment and sex industries).

Regulate and urge the **enforcement** of existing policies. Governments should pay particular attention to sensitizing law enforcers (policemen, judiciary, immigration officials, customs officers and labour inspectors) and provide **incentives** for enforcers; trade unions could campaign for enforcement. Adopt strict **negative sanctions and punishments** to decrease corruption among government officials and law enforcement agents.

Require the licensing, registration, and monitoring of recruitment agencies. Engage employers to establish an **advisory board** that **includes migrant workers** to monitor recruitment practices of registered private employment agencies. Representation empowers migrant voices.

Combining Employment Agency Resources: While private sector recruitment agencies offer advantages to government run agencies (speed and cost), they lack **natural transparency**. Countries such as Vietnam, Cambodia, and Lao PDR should consider utilizing more government run agencies for the sake of securing transparencies.

¹⁶ Alcide and Monares, GENPROM Mission Report, July 2003.

¹⁷ In accordance with The Migration for Employment Convention No. 97 and Migration for Employment Recommendation No. 86; Migrant Workers (supplementary provisions) No. 143.

Brainstorm and support **poverty reducing programs**, since trafficking is so closely linked to poverty. The ILO advocates rural skills training, micro-enterprise development, and micro-finance. Depending on the degree of poverty, programs should aid income generation through cultivating basic survival activities, livelihood enterprises, growth oriented micro-enterprises, and small-enterprise development.¹⁸ See TIAs 2 and 3 for an in-depth analysis of these approaches.

NGOs also play a major role in reducing TICW as they are able to address individual and local needs. Analysis of the effective strategies employed by NGOs provides techniques to emulate as we engage both WOs and EOs.

Model Successes: Learn from the current strategies NGOs employ to combat trafficking. In Hong Kong, the Asian Migration Center (AMC) occupies special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the UN. The AMC focuses on migrant workers' issues in Asia; programs include research, publishing, networking, training and migrant savings, social entrepreneurship and advocacy¹⁹.

Capacity Building: training in cooking, English language, entrepreneurial ventures, upgrading workers' skills as they prepare for return to origin countries. Life skills training and legal literacy education also enhance migrant opportunity.

Exposing violations against trafficked victims and migrant workers including domestic workers to a wider public (e.g. providing documentation, assistance in seeking legal services, holding press conferences) in order to influence the demand factors.

Transitional and counseling services: provision of counseling/ psychological services and shelter housing for distressed workers.

Engaging **NGOs** to organize **workers**: The Visayan Forum in the Philippines, for example, effectively organizes domestic labour.

3. CHALLENGES

One fundamental means of engaging WOs and EOs is to promote cooperation and collaboration with government resources. The systematic failure of governments to deliver promises remains a significant challenge; a continued lack of personnel, information, and effective law enforcement exacerbate the crisis. Apart from these governmental concerns, workers and employers organizations face the following challenges:

- (3.1) lack of incentive and motivation: what's in it for them?;
- (3.2) difficulty in meeting the need for sector-specific outreach;
- (3.3) fragmentation and link to political parties and agenda; and
- (3.4) China's perceived competitive advantage.

(3.1) Lack of Incentive and Motivation: What's In It for Them? (WINIT)

The **Migrant Worker Premium (MWP)**, defined as the money an employer of alien migrant workers expects to save by hiring such informal labour, presents a major barrier in the movement to end trafficking. Alien migrant workers in Thailand are commonly paid only 50 to 80 baht per day without benefits. Trafficked workers are often not paid at all. Such situations may continue as a result of perceived economic incentives and **low levels of risk**. The TICW project seeks to convince employers that *what is cheap now is ultimately more costly in the long run*. WOs and EOs need to be provided with reasons why it is beneficial for them to combat trafficking, and such reasons may be identified by labeling as a starting point a clear understanding of **What's In It For Them**. (WINIT).

(3.2) Difficulty Meeting the Need for Sector Specific Outreach

¹⁸ TIA-3

¹⁹ from studytour to Manila and Hong Kong, 2003.

The threat of trafficking remains most prevalent in the **informal economy**, yet the types of work within this sector vary widely. For instance, programs and means of organizing workers in the sex trade (such as education workshops on women's health issues and access to effective contraception) are quite distinct from initiatives to ensure the health and safety of workers in small catering businesses. **Employers should take focused approach to specific industries**, recognizing the needs of workers in sectors they employ rather than trying to grapple with the informal economy as a whole.

(3.3) Fragmentation and the Link to Political Parties/Agenda

Workers organizations and employers organizations in the GMS are not well organized, and what little organization does exist usually remains linked to political parties. Thus, W&Es do not speak with one unified voice, but rather come across in a fragmented manner. Tripartite discussion and intervention thus becomes a greater challenge.

(3.4) China's Perceived Competitive Advantage

Vastly superior economies of scale in China result in tremendous pressure in the countries of the GMS to remain competitive, either through lowered production costs or by moving into **specific niche markets**. If appropriate action is not taken the result will be massive job losses in the manufacturing industries of Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam - and a subsequent increased pressure on individuals to migrate elsewhere and/or engage with traffickers. China's economic situation presents undeniable long-term consequences for the countries of the Mekong, where inaction in terms of local job creation could leave an open door to trafficking.

4. FURTHER CONSIDERATION

(4.1) Engaging Journalism and the Media as a "watchdog" to expose trafficking and pressure the adoption of international labour standards as well as applaud companies with exemplary labour organization. In an increasingly global economy, companies are aware more than ever of the stigma and soiled reputation attached to the use of child labour and exploitative labour conditions. The media remains a powerful, underutilized resource in the fight against trafficking.

(4.2) Mobilizing existing communication networks. WOs and EOs often have their own communication networks and press officers that can be targeted to educate and raise awareness on trafficking.

(4.3) Enlisting voluntary aid of **prominent political leaders, athletes, scholars, and entertainers** as **spokespersons** to bring international attention to the issue of trafficking and labour issues. Global awareness remains the first step to global solutions.

(4.4) Promoting the advantages and positive aspects of migration, including economic impacts of remittance funds, decreased unemployment rates, and increased national production. **Visual ad campaigns** have a powerful impact; for instance, a photo of the Petronas Towers in Kuala Lumpur with the caption, "The work of migrant workers." Similarly, the image of a double-income family in Singapore, difficult to maintain without the aid of a domestic (often migrant) worker. Migrants can bring to a country more value than they extract.

(4.5) Pressuring **consumers** to engage in ethically and socially responsible business transactions may reduce the consumption of products and services generated in exploitative or unfair conditions. Though the desire for cheap goods and services remains a reality, often times consumers are simply ignorant of the magnitude of exploitation and the plight trafficked victims face. Education is a key step in promoting responsibility.