



# Evaluation Summaries

## Economic and Social Empowerment of Returned Victims of Trafficking

### Quick Facts

**Countries:** Philippines and Thailand

**Mid-Term Evaluation:** October 2008

**Mode of Evaluation:** Independent

**Technical Area:** Social Empowerment,  
Trafficking

**Evaluation Management:** ILO-IPEC's Design,  
Evaluation and Documentation Section (DED)

**Evaluation Team:** Keith Jeddere-Fisher

**Project End:** 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009

**Project Code:** RAS/05/03/HSF

**Donor:** United Nations Trust Fund for Human  
Security (US\$ 1,923,195)

**Keywords:** Child Labour, Social  
Empowerment, Human Trafficking

### Background & Context

#### Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The project 'Economic and Social Empowerment of Returned Victims of Trafficking' (described in this report as 'the project') in Thailand and the Philippines is funded by the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (HSF) and implemented by the International Labour Organisation's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (ILO/IPEC). The Project received financial support from HSF amounting to US\$ 1,923,195.

The start date was 1st May 2006 and the planned completion date is 30th April 2009.

The development objective of the Project matches the goal of the HSF and is: 'To contribute to the reduction of trafficking in children and women for sexual and labour exploitation in Asia, through support to a humane reintegration process of returned trafficked victims back to their countries of origin.'

The first immediate objectives: is 'By the end of the project, returned trafficked victims to Thailand and the Philippines will have been assisted, empowered and protected from re-trafficking.' A target of 1,200 - 1,500 was set.

The second immediate objective is: 'By the end of the project, the capacities of service providers to reintegrate child, adolescent and young adult victims of trafficking will have been improved in Thailand and the Philippines, in particular in the areas of referral services, career counseling and case documentation.'

#### Present situation of project Thailand

Information on the number of returnees, whether trafficked or not, and what happens to them is very limited and it is not possible to make any observations on changes in these numbers.

By the end of the project there may be some information from project partners on the

returnees that they have provided assistance to but it is unlikely that this information will be available in a consolidated form.

### **Philippines**

There is some information on returning migrants but it is held by different organizations and there does not appear to be effective consolidation of the information held by DSWD, OWWA and the Department of Foreign Affairs. How many of these are victims of trafficking is not known.

More trafficked returnees are being identified/assisted but this is not necessarily due to a greater number. There is more attention being given to returnees who have been trafficked and the crackdown in Malaysia on illegal migrants has also affected the inflow.

Deployments of new migrants to Japan have reduced. In 2004 it was 80,000 and in 2007 5,000 but during the same period there has been an increase in spouse visas for marriage. From among the project partners OWWA had got good records of those it has assisted and these will soon be entered into a database to make analysis easier. Information that will inform future interventions is already available from them, for example 62% of returned victims want to re-migrate.

The DSWD database and associated client card should within the next two months be able to provide consolidated information on all of the returnees assisted by this project (with the possible exception of OWWA).

### **Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation**

The scope of the evaluation will encompass the HSF Trafficking project implemented in Thailand and the Philippines with all its activities and outputs, including all action programmes. The focus is on the project as a whole rather than a series of individual evaluations of specific components or action programmes. There will be appropriate consideration of phase I achievements and the work of ILO-IPEC on trafficking in the

Mekong region, in particular the TICW project.

The main purposes for which the evaluation should be conducted are to

- a. Identify and analyze achievement to date
- b. Assess the continued relevance of the strategy
- c. Assess progress towards sustainability
- d. Identify potential lessons learned and good practices
- e. Identify possible follow-up action and continued work after the project.

The main user of this evaluation will be the ILO office, IPEC as a global programme, the IPEC project management, national stakeholders (provincial committees, government organizations, NGO partners, and the target groups themselves) and the donor.

### **Methodology of evaluation**

#### **Process**

The evaluation was conducted according to the following outline process:

1. Review of project documents and reports, written outputs and other documentation by the evaluator.
2. Preparation of schedules of visits and workshops.
3. Preparation of the evaluation instrument (18th September 2008).
4. Consultations, interviews and field visits with key stakeholders in Thailand and the Philippines including participation in national partners' meetings.
5. Informal feedback to partners following field visits.
6. Debriefing with National Project Managers (NPMs) following each country Visit.
7. Debriefing with project staff and ILO SRO staff (6th October 2008).
8. Preparation of draft report and circulation to key stakeholders (14th October 2008).
9. Preparation of the final evaluation report considering the comments from the key stakeholders.

## Main Findings & Conclusions

### Project design and logical structure

The project has an appropriate design, seeking to provide direct assistance and to develop improved capacity, in response to a recognized need. The logical framework is coherent.

### Implementation of the project (efficiency)

Project start up was very slow, taking 6 months before anything significant happened. There were no staff appointed to take responsibility specifically for this project either at the national or the bi-national level until November 2006. The preparation of action programmes (APs) also took a long time due to the need for multiple revisions and most of them started June to August 2007, 13 to 15 months after the project had started. The Programme Coordinator's post is due to end in October 2008 and there is no provision for it to continue to the end of the project.

The project is implemented through subcontract partnerships with government and nongovernmental organizations and effectively builds strategic partnerships between these organisations. There is a significant financial contribution from the partners. There is close monitoring of the partners by the National Project Managers (NPM). The project and some AP reports are late and do not give clear quantitative information on progress against the indicators in the logframe. There is coordination at the regional and national levels with other organisations. The collaboration with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), with which there are shared objectives, could be improved.

### Achievement and results (effectiveness)

To date 813 victims of trafficking have participated in the project and are at various stages of receiving assistance. The type of assistance received depends on their needs and includes medical and legal referral, support for social and economic recovery and reintegration. This includes career advice, training, assistance with employment and grants for the establishment of self-employment.

Probably less than half of the participants actually returned to their home country during the period of the project. The others had returned earlier but were still in need of assistance. The majority of the participants are 30 years or older. There is an important group of younger and more recent returnees that the project is not reaching effectively.

Social empowerment activities have clearly been effective, especially where returnees have been members of a peer support group. Economic empowerment has been through the provision of career guidance, training and grants or loans. Most of these are quite small and are providing a small income, generally insufficient as a sole income for a family. There are important non-economic benefits from these activities and they have an important contribution for the overall rehabilitation of the participant.

For capacity development the project has supported the development of a number of products:

- Provincial Career Catalogue, Phayao, Thailand.
- Skills training and job catalogue - Philippines
- Guidelines on a referral system on the recovery and reintegration of trafficked persons- Philippines
- Data collection/documentation of returned trafficked victims – Philippines
- Case Management Manual for Overseas Workers Welfare Association (OWWA) officers - Philippines
- Research on return and reintegration experiences of trafficked women- Thailand and Philippines.

The above outputs are completed or in their final stages. There have been significant capacity building developments in the Philippines and the well prepared and widely accepted referral guidelines and associated client card and database are expected to improve the services provided to returnees and there is the clear potential for a common database on victims of trafficking. The

OWWA manual will also improve the return and aftercare of its members.

Databases have been developed but there is no commonly accepted client profile. Other significant capacity building achievements have been:

- The multi-disciplinary team (MDT) in POCHT-Chiang Rai, Thailand.

- Realisation in OWWA of the special needs of returned victims of trafficking - Philippines

- An improved conceptual understanding of reintegration emphasizing that it is not just about going “home” but rather a matter on being empowered economically and socially – Thailand and Philippines.

### **Progress towards sustainability of project impacts**

The social empowerment of participants should have lasting effects and benefits. The economic empowerment has certainly contributed to their overall rehabilitation and in most cases is likely to provide a moderate income for some time.

The capacity, in terms of awareness, skills and commitment, of all of the implementing partners has increased and they will continue to contribute to their organizational resources to meet the needs of victims of trafficking.

In the Philippines the capacity building products will have a significant and lasting impact. The partners responsible for the two main guidelines are committed to providing training on them to their staff beyond the life of the project. ILO could increase the effect of this if financial support is provided so that other stakeholders can also participate in the training.

In Thailand there are no significant capacity building products. With the limited reliable information on the number of victims of trafficking returning to Thailand and the Philippines each year, the need in terms of care for individual returnees is similar to what it was at the beginning of the project. In Thailand the capacity of individual partners to

respond to this has increased. In the Philippines, in addition to the capacity of the individual partners, there is an improved common understanding and process among partner organisations and an agreed information base for documentation.

## **Recommendations & Lessons Learned**

### **Main recommendations and follow-up**

#### **Recommendations to UN TFHS (HSF) for future projects:**

1. The higher priority given to the provision of direct services relative to the priority for capacity building to improve coordination, information and methodologies for the reintegration of returnees should be reviewed.

#### **Recommendations to ILO and ILO/IPEC for future projects:**

1. The most appropriate institutional base within ILO should be reviewed for any future projects rehabilitating trafficked returnees to Thailand and the Philippines.
2. Projects that seek to achieve both psychosocial recovery and economic reintegration of the same participants need to assess the time required to achieve these objectives.
3. Prior to any new capacity building interventions in Thailand, research and discussion should be carried out to clarify which are the responsible institutions to handle victims of trafficking.
4. The reporting period of the first action programme TPRs should be adjusted so that all partners are reporting over the same time period and this should fit with the project annual reporting period.
5. Project documents should provide more specific details on the intended target beneficiaries relating to when they returned to their home country.
6. In order to provide effective assistance to *immediate* returnees more specific strategies need to be developed and more attention given to partner selection.

### **Recommendations to ILO/IPEC regarding HSF project implementation:**

1. ILO/IPEC should appoint a Programme Coordinator (at least 50% position) to cover the period November 2008 to April 2009.
2. The second project annual report (September 2007-August 2008) should be completed as soon as possible.
3. A project monitoring system needs to be established immediately that will enable the project to collect and analyze the information on services provided to direct beneficiaries.
4. The final project report should use the indicators in the logframe to report progress towards the objectives .
5. The project should ensure that AP technical reports are submitted within one month of the reporting period and that they use the indicators in their logframe to report progress towards their objectives.
6. Suitable arrangements need to be made to either manage or revise the BATWC AP that currently continues beyond the project period.
7. The project should cooperate more effectively with the IOM in Thailand on the overall goal of improving the referral process and specifically on their cooperation with BATWC.
8. Depending on the nature of the intervention, the project and partners should agree on a cut-off date for the recruitment of new beneficiaries even if targets have not been achieved.
9. The strategy for provision of career counseling to returnees should be reviewed in Thailand and in the Philippines.
10. The project strategy and support provided for professional vocational training needs to be reviewed and emphasized with the partners.
11. The project needs to obtain a commitment from partners that are using grant funds as a rotating loan, so that the funds will continue to be used for the same purpose after project completion.
12. The project should improve the advice and support provided by partners for self-employment preparation by using existing external expertise in this area.
13. The AP with BATWC needs to be urgently reviewed and a decision made on the

development of the ‘Handbook on economic recovery and integration for returnees’. It may be necessary to cancel this output from the project.

14. A consultation should be facilitated by the project between the partners on data needs, storage and analysis of information on victims of trafficking, in order to agree on a common way forwards. - Thailand only

15. Any training provided by the DSWD on the referral guidelines should include participants from NGOs and other GOs that are involved in supporting victims of trafficking – Philippines only

16. The DSWD database development and consolidation needs to ensure that OWWA data is included in the data set and analysis – Philippines only

17. Implementing partners need to be encouraged more strongly to identify and use the best sources of advice and support for the participants especially in the areas of career counseling, skill training and business/entrepreneurship training.

### **Recommendation to ILO Philippines:**

1. Support should be provided to DSWD for their training on the referral guidelines in other parts of the Philippines so that it can include participants from NGOs and other GOs that are involved in supporting victims of trafficking (after the completion of the project)

### **Important lessons learned**

Some of these lessons had already been identified by the project and others became apparent during the course of the evaluation.

- Economic enterprises need to be preceded by psycho-social recovery and that may take considerable time. Projects and APs seeking to provide recovery and reintegration services need to be planned with a timeframe that is appropriate.

- If project staff are not recruited and appointed to work on a specific project, there are likely to be delays in the implementation of that project.

- APs that have capacity building objectives that will support and enhance the outputs of

direct implementation APs should be prioritized for an early start.

- Flexibility is absolute key for successful direct assistance. Victims of trafficking return from a myriad of different situations, different countries and different sectors. Each returnee has specific needs and concerns and has specific strengths and resources. Those must determine the type of assistance provided. Thus, service providers must be prepared to address different needs and situations
- Economic empowerment incentives resources need to be enough to offer an attractive alternative to re-migrating.
- Economic empowerment activities that involve the family can have a very important contribution to re-integration, not just to the family, but to the wider community.
- Skills training courses offered by partners are often limited both in terms variety and quality. It is important to link skills training to private sector and out-side ‘Real life’ on the job training.
- Returnees are still subject to the same economic pressure that led them to migrate in the first place and re-migration, with as many safeguards as possible, needs to be offered as an option.
- Reintegration and settling in the community can be supported by assistance to family members. Many women migrate for the sake of their family. Interventions to family members can also assist the reintegration process. It is important to care for the whole family, not just the returnee. Having a supportive family is important for self-esteem and for reintegration.
- More awareness in sending communities can help with the identification of new returnees and facilitate their participation in re-integration quickly.
- When developing data collection formats that are expected to be used by different organizations it is essential that real and effective consultation with those organisations takes place.

### **Potential good practices**

The following potential good practices have been identified during the evaluation. They

may not necessarily be new but within this specific context and the needs being addressed they have clearly been effective. Economic empowerment for the reintegration of victims of trafficking Grants or loans for income generating activities or for the establishment of small businesses can have a number of positive impacts:

- Migrant workers migrate mainly for economic reasons and when they return these economic pressures are still there. If they are not met in a safe environment there is a high chance of further exploitation .
- The availability of economic empowerment activities can be a strong motivation for participating in the ‘reintegration group’ and therefore accessing the other services which the returnees may not immediately recognise that they are in need of.
- Involvement in economic activities requires participation in the wider community and contributes significant to social reintegration
- Involvement in economic activities can be a strong incentive to settle in one location, improving social rehabilitation and reducing the risk of further exploitation.
- When the activity is carried out as a family there can be additional family reintegration benefits Multi-disciplinary team (MDT) Multi-disciplinary team (MDT) of professionals working together on the identification, recovery and rehabilitation of returned trafficked victims. The presence of a lawyer on the team can give the whole team a better understanding of legal issues and greater confidence in this area.

District protection committee/community watch network District and sub-district committee/community watch network can be very effective for prevention and suppression of human trafficking and for identifying returnees. If good training is provided then the community can take responsibility for awareness raising, protection and for the quick identification of returnees who may be victims of trafficking.