

Combating Human Trafficking in the Mekong



UN Inter-Agency Project on Trafficking in Women and Children in the Mekong Sub-region

Inter-Agency Project Underway at Last!

The UN Inter-Agency Project aims to reduce trafficking of women and children in the Mekong Sub-region through improving national and regional co-ordination, identifying and filling gaps in programme implementation and adding value to existing programmes. It includes Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Viet Nam and Yunnan Province of China and is supported by the UN Foundation (Ted Turner Fund) and AusAID.

Welcome to the first newsletter of the UN Inter-Agency Project on Trafficking of Women and Children in the Mekong Sub-region. We won't always command the front page of the newsletter, but this is a good opportunity to bring everyone up to date with the project, as well as our thoughts for the newsletter.

Phil Marshall commenced work as Programme Manager in mid-June, joining Kuniko Takamatsu, Programme Officer, and Nuankae Wongthawatchai, Project Assistant. As requested by the UN Working Group, Phil has spent most of his time to date meeting with partner agencies and visiting all the project countries, only China now remaining. We aim to have all the National Project Co-ordinators on board by the end of November and workplans for the rest of this year are being finalized in each country, with the main emphasis being on laying the ground-

work for a detailed programme in 2001.

With more and more projects in trafficking and related areas, the task of improving co-ordination is increasingly challenging. In particular, there has been considerable interest in how the Inter-Agency Project will collaborate with the ILO-IPEC's Mekong Sub-regional Project to Combat Trafficking and IOM's new project for the Return and Reintegration of Trafficked Women and Children in the Mekong region. The three projects will be working together closely at both regional and country level. We have agreed that, in line with their organizational mandates, the IOM project will take the lead in return and rehabilitation and ILO will have a prime focus on employment (creation) and training. The Inter-Agency project will have the lead role in data collection and co-ordination, the latter



Phil Marshall at the Thai National Project Committee's First Meeting, 21 June 2000

being defined broadly to include supporting activities which address gaps in national and regional programmes. Due to this 'filling the gaps' role, the nature of activities supported by the project is likely to vary from country to country.

Inside this issue:

Inter-Agency Project	1
TWC Newsletter	1
Notice Board	2
Recent Publications	2
ESCAP Launches Reports	3
The Slave Business	4
The UN General Assembly Special	5
Women in Small Business	6
Target of Traffickers Shifts Away	6
ARIAT Meeting	7
Useful Links	7
What's coming up?	8

TWC Newsletter

Thank you for all agencies who have contributed to this first issue. Our target audience is organizations working in trafficking and related areas around the region. We see this as forum to share information on what people are doing, in particular, what types of programmes seem to be working. While accurate problem

definition is always important, we would like to put more emphasis on how people are working to overcome these problems.

One problem which shouldn't be too hard to resolve is a name for our newsletter – we are holding a competition for this – see page two. As well as

articles, we would welcome feedback on the format of the newsletter, letters to the editor, and entries for our calendar of events.

**Inter-Agency Project
Management Office**

Notice Board

YOUR CHANCE FOR FAME AND FORTUNE!



The Inter-Agency project is looking for a name for its newsletter. Ideally, the title should be a bit catchy – we may be prepared to sacrifice a bit of accuracy for style!

Entries close 31

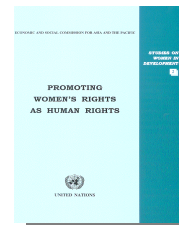
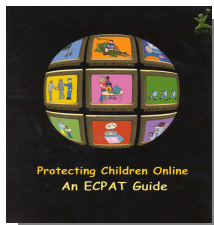


October – winner will receive prize!

Save the Children is undertaking two regional projects.

1. Participatory Action Research with Migrant Children and Youth in Cross-Border Areas in China, Myanmar and Thailand. This project is managed and implemented by Save the Children (UK), Southeast, East Asia and the Pacific Region. The research report is expected later this year.
2. Regional Advocacy Project on Trafficking in Women and Children. This project is undertaken by International Save the Children Alliance, Southeast, East Asia and Pacific Region. A comparative study of the legal framework and the laws relevant to trafficking in women and children in the six countries in the Mekong Sub-region (i.e., Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, Viet Nam and Yunnan Province of China). This study, which will identify gaps and produce recommendations for further action, should be completed later this year.

Recent Publications/ Working Papers



ECPAT

Protecting Children Online
An ECPAT Guide (July 2000)

UNAIDS

Report on the Global HIV/AIDS Epidemic
(June 2000)

UNAIDS Fact Sheet:
HIV/AIDS in Asia

Men Make Difference
World AIDS Campaign

Epidemiological Fact
Sheets for all Mekong
Sub-region countries
(updated June 2000)

WID-ESCAP

Promoting Women's Rights as
Human Rights

IOM

World Migration Report 2000
(September 2000)

Perspectives on Trafficking of
Migrants (September 2000)

ILO

Child Prostitution in Northern
Viet Nam (March 2000)

Trafficking in Children and
Women: A Regional Overview
(March 2000)

Child Prostitution in Southern
Viet Nam (forthcoming Sep-
tember 2000)

A Study on Groups Vulnerable
to Trafficking in Border Areas
of Myanmar/Thailand and
Laos/Thailand (forthcoming
September 2000)

UNDP

ASEAN Workshop on
Population Movement
and HIV Vulnerability
(June 2000)

Early Warning Rapid Re-
sponse System HIV Vul-
nerability Caused by Mo-
bility Related to Develop-
ment (July 2000)

UNDCP

Sandro Calvani's most re-
cent book, (Sandro Calvani
& Martina Melis, "Gli schiavi
parlano", Ed. Pero Manni,
Italy, 2000) provides a
unique overview of contem-
porary forms of slavery cov-
ering debt-bondage, traffick-
ing in women, child soldiers,
drugs countries, sex tour-
ism, religious slavery, child
labour and many more.

ESCAP Launches Reports on Sexual Exploitation of Children and Youth in Asia

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) recently launched twelve country reports and two subregional reports on the situation of sexually abused and sexually exploited children and youth in South Asia and the Greater Mekong Subregion. In 1998, ESCAP began a four-year programme on eliminating sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and youth in Asia and the Pacific. ESCAP began by conducting qualitative research to determine the health and social service needs of sexually abused and sexually exploited young people in Asia, and the capacity of care providers to respond effectively to those needs. In many countries, the research was the first of its kind ever conducted.

The twelve countries participating in the regional programme are Bangladesh, Cambodia, China (Yunnan Province), Lao People's Democratic Republic, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Viet Nam. The programme is being supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agenda (Sida), the Governments of Japan and

Australia, the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS).

Primary research found that there were virtually no specialized services available for young victims and, where services did exist, they focused solely on physical recovery, with almost no regard to the psychosocial care victims desperately need. The research also found that young victims are at high risk of pregnancy, injury from physical abuse, and STDs (including HIV/AIDS), as well as suffering from numerous social, psychological and emotional problems which are not being addressed.

To overcome this situation, ESCAP's Human Resources Development (HRD) Section has developed the "ESCAP HRD Course on Psychosocial and Medical Services for Sexually Abused and Sexually Exploited Children and Youth." The Course is initially being conducted at a subregional level in South Asia and the Greater Mekong Subregion, and is designed to increase the capacity of health and social service personnel to better assist young victims and sup-

port their recovery.

The Course focuses on the medical and psychosocial health needs of young victims, as well as the related problems of substance abuse and HIV/AIDS prevention. Through this Course, a pool of competent health and social service personnel are being trained to provide the psychosocial services needed to support sexually abused and sexually exploited children and youth, and aid in their reintegration into society. This pool of trained personnel will then be able to return to their own countries to train other health and social service providers at the national level, further expanding the services available to sexually abused and sexually exploited children and youth throughout the region.



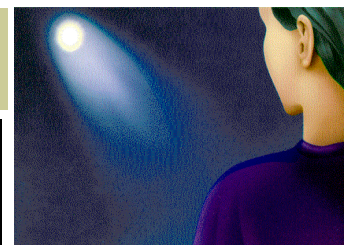
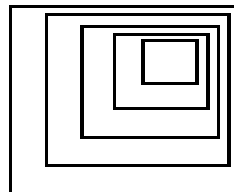
National HRD Workshop on Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children and Youth in Lao PDR, Vientiane, May 4-6, 1999

ESCAP-HRD

In 1998, ESCAP began a four-year programme on eliminating sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and youth in Asia and the Pacific.

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The Slave Business: the most promising synergy of Gross Criminal Product



CICP expert visiting NBI (the National Bureau of Investigation).

"Four centuries of slavery have caused the deportation of about twelve million people. Today, 200 million men, women and children are living in slavery or in slavery-like conditions under the sway or in the hands of traffickers of various kinds worldwide. In the last decade, more than 30 million people may have been trafficked within and from South-East Asia for sexual purpose and sweatshop labor."¹

Transnational organized crime syndicates are among the first to take full advantage of the new global reach made possible by the revolution in communication, transportation and commerce.

For modern integrated criminal systems, the exploitation business represents a source of enormous profit. It is estimated that trafficking in human beings represents a 6-billion dollar-year global business. It appears that this trade has become so profitable that in some cases even drug traffickers are switching to it and offshore banking centres are seeing more and more money coming from human slave traders world-wide.

The modern smuggling and trafficking in human beings is a transnational crime by nature. But in many cases, criminal justice systems are ill prepared to face this new global challenge.

With an emphasis on the growing criminal involvement, the **Centre for International Crime Prevention (CICP)** of the UN Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention has developed a new strategy and new instruments to assist governments in the fight against this global scourge.

The **Global Programme against Trafficking in Human Beings**, launched in 1999, combines policy-oriented research on data collection and assessment with targeted technical cooperation. Its aim is to bring

to the forefront the involvement of organized crime in trafficking in humans and to develop an effective criminal justice response.

The Global Programme will lead to the formulation of an international strategy, based on the outcome of national and regional projects. The result will then be presented and discussed at a global forum in 2002.

Within the Global Programme, technical cooperation is being launched in four regions: South-East Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America and West Africa. In South East Asia, UN/ODCCP has started a **pilot project in the Philippines**. Activities range from establishing a national coordination mechanism, developing a database on organised crime involvement in trafficking and on best practices to address it, awareness-raising and training for law enforcement officers, to supporting victims and witnesses. The implementation of existing national legislation and international agreements on criminal matters and problems encountered by law enforcement officers and criminal justice personnel are also going to be confronted.

Furthermore, there is the **International Convention against Transnational Organised Crime**. Its purpose is to set the basic standards for forms of international cooperation, such as extradition and legal assistance, and to extend these standards over more countries. It is supplemented by three additional protocols, two of which focussing on trafficking and smuggling: the Protocol dealing with smuggling of migrants and the Protocol dealing with trafficking in persons, especially women and children. The Draft Convention and Draft Protocols are planned to be submitted for adoption to the Millennium United Nations General Assembly in this year. Intensive discussions among member

states to meet the goal are currently taking place.

With the extension of its mandate to cover not only drugs control policies but also transnational organised crime activities, the **UNDCP Regional Centre for East Asia and the Pacific – Bangkok** will soon become actively involved in the fight against transnational crime's human rights violations.

Its Representative, Dr. Sandro Calvani, is strongly committed to take action in this area. He believes that it is necessary to speed up the pace of pro-active work at national and international level and that collaborative partnerships are the key to succeed in our common mission.

Martina Melis
Programme Officer, UNDCP

¹Excerpt from an interview to Pino Arlacchi, UN/ODCCP Executive Director, with "The New York Times", 25 June 2000. Since his appointment, Prof. Pino Arlacchi has been a strong advocate of the need to find instruments to counter this massive and intolerable violation of human rights. To the issue of slavery, he has devoted his most recent and very successful book ("Schiavi", Rizzoli, Italy 1999).

"Trafficking in humans is the fastest growing criminal market in the world because of the number of people involved, the scale of profits being generated for criminal organizations and because of its multifold nature. We do not have just sexual exploitation. We do not have just economic slavery, which includes forced labour and debt enslavement. We have also a lot of exploitation of migrants. And we have classic slavery.

If we put them all together under the same concept, you get the **biggest violation of human rights in the world**".

Pino Arlacchi
UN/ODCCP Executive
Director

The UN General Assembly Special Session on Women Concluded with Strengthened Governments' Commitment to Anti-Trafficking Efforts

The Governments participating in the Global Review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (5-10 June 2000, New York) were united in strengthening actions "to combat and eliminate all forms of trafficking in women and girls". At the national level, Governments are committed to addressing the root factors that encourage trafficking, and to devise, enforce, and strengthen effective measures through a comprehensive anti-trafficking strategy consisting of legislative measures, prevention campaigns, exchange of information, assistance and protection for and reintegration of the victims and prosecution of all the offenders involved through both criminal and civil measures. Measures

for protection of the victims may include prevention of trafficked victims from being prosecuted for their illegal entry or residence. **An emphasis is given to coordination of activities through a national coordinating mechanism to encourage the exchange of information and to report on data, root causes, factors and trends in violence against women, in particular trafficking.**

At the national and international level, Governments, regional and international organizations, and other actors are committed to "intensify cooperation between states of origin, transit and destination to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons". They may pursue and support strategies to reduce the risk to women and girls, including refugees, the displaced, and migrant workers, of becoming victims of trafficking.

They may also enact social and economic policies and programmes, as well as information and awareness raising initiatives, prosecute perpetrators, and provide measures to support, assist and protect trafficked persons in countries of origin and destination; and facilitate their return to and support their reintegration in countries of origin. The need to speedily conclude negotiations on the additional protocol to the Convention on Transnational Organized Crime concerning the trafficking of human beings was emphasized as a future tool in fighting against the spread of trafficking in women.

ESCAP-WID



Illustration from ESCAP project, "Promotion of Beijing Platform for Action through NGO networks in South Asia"

Governments are committed to addressing the root factors that encourage trafficking.

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Women in Small Business in Indochina Issues and Key Approaches



Business women from Indochina attending a business enhancement course in the Philippines.

Economic development is perhaps the key measure for reducing trafficking in women and children.

Economic development is perhaps the key measure for reducing trafficking in women and children. The economic empowerment of women has long been recognized as a central tenet for improving the status and welfare of women. It is also central to the economic development of a region where a high percentage of women are head of their households. In this regard, ESCAP has been supporting promotion of women's economic participation in Indochina since 1996, involving locally-based women's unions as well as national level women's organizations and line ministries.

In Indochina (and elsewhere in the Asia-Pacific region), women have become increasingly involved in starting their own businesses in order to gain economic advancement within the context of their countries' economic reform. These small businesses have made a significant contribution to the Indochinese economies, promoting employment, reducing poverty, fostering economic development, and

enhancing inter- and intra-sectoral linkages.

Challenges faced by women in the business environment include lack of capital and training opportunities and insufficient legal and regulatory frameworks. As well as measures to address these challenges, decision makers need to pursue gender-sensitive and non-discriminatory social and economic policies to improve the operating conditions of women in small business and programmes. This includes recognition of the double burden of work and family responsibilities that can handicap women in the competitive business environment – child care and other social support services need to be provided. Also, establishing and strengthening business associations and networks will help provide the support system women need to start or improve their businesses. Given the economic crisis in the region, the small business sector is extremely vulnerable to external shocks. Now, more than ever, as expansion of the formal sector is unlikely and

access to capital even more difficult, it is time for government and the private sector to work together to promote small businesses. Providing funding and training, changing the legal and regulatory framework, and strengthening the support system for women in small business will all work to help them move from the charge of others to full-fledged economic contributors and agents of development. This will also help to bring a change in community perception of women from commodities with values only when sold to outsiders to productive and indispensable community members with values of their own.

ESCAP-WID

Target of Traffickers Shifts Away From Thailand?



Visiting staff members of DEP. Dr. Sadthinat (left) and Mr. England (right).

Chiang Rai and Phayao based NGO's, YMCA Phayao and Development and Education Programme for Daughters and Community Centre (DEP) are well known for running a dormitory and providing non-formal education for hill tribe children at risk of trafficking. YWCA and DEP support hill tribe children within Thailand, but are well aware that the target of trafficking has shifted from children and women in the neighboring countries. According to Dr. Sadthinat, Chiang Mai University, the major sending communities of trafficking these days are Myanmar and Yunnan Province of China. An informal survey on the brothels

in the communities of Mae Sai discovered many young women and children were from hill tribes of Myanmar and Yunnan and many were under 18 years old, including some under 15 years old. These young women and children have been smuggled through border point of Mae Ai district and trafficked further to destinations such as Chiang Mai and Bangkok. They are also known to work at orchards where use of pesticides is causing deterioration of their skin. In response to these problems, Mae Ai district office has conducted a registration project to help provide proper health care and identification to those

who migrate further into Thailand. DEP visits Burmese children at the bordering bridge to provide rapid life skill training on a weekly basis. While progress is slow, however YMCA, DEP and Dr. Sadthinat believe that "many specks will create a big mountain."

Kuniko Takamatsu
Programme Officer
Inter-Agency Project
Management Office

Another Regional Initiative Against Trafficking - ARIAT

ARIAT, the Asian Regional Initiative Against Trafficking in Women and Children, was launched at a conference in Manila on 29-31 March. Participants and observers included government and NGO representatives including four Mekong countries – Cambodia, China, Thailand and Viet Nam.

The conference comprised three plenary sessions: requisites of a global campaign; regional perspectives and responses; and resources, technology, networking and capacity building approaches. This was followed by six workshops on a range of issues covering awareness raising and participation, prevention, legislation and law enforcement, rescue and reintegration.

Discussions highlighted the fact that a wide range of trafficking concerns were being addressed ranging from in-

ter-regional to international trafficking, trafficking for sexual and labour exploitation to trafficking for immigration purposes, and trafficking of children to that of, in some cases, consenting adults. The numerous agendas led to a controversy as to whether all cases of trafficking constituted a violation of human rights. In the end, reaching agreement on a Meeting Statement provide difficult, leading to a "Chairperson's Statement" instead, supplemented by a statement by international organizations, which had been excluded from the drafting process.

It is not clear what will arise from the conference as there is no funding directly associated with ARIAT for ongoing activities. The "Action Plan" did not present many new ideas for those who have been involved in this issue. However, it did emphasize some

important areas that could be better addressed. These include the need for improved data collection systems, the need to standardize data at all levels and the importance of supporting finalisation of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, part of the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

Lorraine Corner
Regional Advisor

Re-
UNIFEM

Documents from the conference are available from the Inter-Agency Project Office.

Useful Links



AusAID <http://www.usaid.gov.au>
ESCAP <http://www.unescap.org>

ECPAT <http://ecpat.net>
GAATW <http://inet.co.th/org/gaatw>

ILO/IPEC <http://www.ilo.org>
MRLC <http://mekonglawcenter.org>

IOM <http://www.iom.int>
UNAIDS <http://www.unaids.org>

UNDCP <http://www.undcp.org>
UNESCO <http://www.unesco.org>

UNDP <http://www.undp.org>
UNFPA <http://www.unfpa.org>

UNHCR <http://www.unhcr.org>
UNIFEM <http://www.unifem.org>

UNICEF <http://www.unicef.org>
OHCHR <http://unhchr.ch>

UNDCP Regional Centre for East Asia and the Pacific
UNDP Country Office in Thailand

<http://www.undcp.un.or.th>
<http://www.undp.or.th>

UN/ODCCP
UNOPS Asia Office

<http://www.odccp.org>
<http://www.unops.org/offices/asiaoffice.html>

Office of the UN Resident Coordinator in Thailand
Save the Children

<http://un.or.th>
<http://savethechildren.org>

The Global Programme against Trafficking in Human Beings

http://www.uncjin.org/CICP/traff_e.pdf

The International Convention against Transnational Organised Crime
<http://www.uncjin.org/Documents/documents.html#Convention>



What's coming Up?

Date and Venue	Title/Activity	Organization
5-7 September Bangkok	Asia-Pacific Seminar of Experts on "The Protection of Migrants and Trafficking in Persons with particular reference to Women and Children"	OHCHR in cooperation with ESCAP
7-29 September Pattaya	Subregional ESCAP HRD Course on Psychological and Medical Services for Sexually Abused and Sexually Exploited Children and Youth for the Greater Mekong Subregion	ESCAP-HRD
15 September Bangkok	Launching of ESCAP Studies on the Status of Sexually Abused and Sexually Exploited Children and Youth: A Qualitative Assessment of their Health Needs and Available Services in the Greater Mekong Subregion and South Asia	HRD-ESCAP
September	ILO-National Stakeholder Ownership Exercises in Cambodia	ILO
October	ILO-National Stakeholder Ownership Exercises in Laos and Thailand	ILO
October	Asian Regional Meeting on Monitoring Child Labour at the Workplace	ILO
30 October-5 November Bangkok	Training in Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPRA) Methodology in the Context of Trafficking in Women	GAATW
7-8 November Bangkok	Law Enforcement Training	MRLC
November Bangkok	Regional Asia-Pacific Conference	CPCR
November Bangkok	Seminar on Research Methodology and Standards	UNESCO

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Editor's Notes

The Newsletter is published four times a year by the Trafficking in Women and Children in the Mekong Sub-region Project. The views expressed in the Newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor or the Trafficking in Women and Children in the Mekong Sub-region Project.

WE ARE ON THE WEB!
WWW.UN.OR.TH



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