



International
Labour
Office

Three Northern Provinces Join Forces Establishing Anti-Trafficking Data Centers and Assisting Victims of Trafficking

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Chiang Rai, Thailand – ILO News – The International Labour Organization, through its IPEC Mekong Project to Combat Trafficking in Children and Women (ILO-IPEC-TICW), today announced the launch of a series of partner-driven action programmes to fight human trafficking in three border provinces of Northern Thailand.

New anti-trafficking data collection centers, victim-support hotlines and awareness raising about the dangers of human trafficking, strengthening networks, developing provincial and district mechanism for the prevention of trafficking, as well as promoting community and school ‘watchdogs’ are all part of a two-year drive to combat human trafficking in high-risk areas of the north. Support of tourism promotion and training to villagers in Hill Tribe areas is also being expanded to improve local income generation.

In collaboration with Government, including the Governors of all three provinces, NGOs and other social partners, four action programmes (APs) are being implemented in Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai and Phayao provinces. A fifth is expected to be approved later in the year. The Action Programmes range in duration from 16 to 24 months at a cost of more than 17,000,000 Baht in technical funding, provided locally and through the ILO-IPEC-TICW technical assistance project.

Nearly 12,000 children and women at a heightened risk of trafficking in the three provinces are expected to benefit directly through these interventions by reducing their vulnerability to trafficking. Hundreds of school teachers, community and business leaders and others are also expected to benefit.

The ILO has also been working within the framework of Thailand’s internal MOUs to assist the victims of trafficking among 9 provinces. The centers were established by the Governors of each province.

The programmes emphasize partnerships with local and regional authorities, capacity building and awareness raising as tools to fight trafficking, with a focus on vulnerable groups such as high school students and indigenous and transient ethnic communities.

In Chiang Rai, ILO-IPEC-TICW is supporting a Hill Tribe Home-Stay project. Ethnic groups from this region are more vulnerable to human trafficking partly due to a lack of skills and opportunities. Through the work of the Mirror Art Foundation, one-hundred Akha and Lahu families in four villages are learning to offer a culturally sensitive holiday to foreign and domestic tourists visiting the North of Thailand. This project provides the double benefit of added income and the reduced incentive of ill-prepared migration to the south (a time when children and women are more vulnerable).

Students at Ban Mae Chan school are also being offered vocational training in dress making, cooking and metal work to provide them marketable skills. Their teachers will be trained in how to identify children at high risk of trafficking and how to prevent their exploitation by traffickers.

In Chiang Mai, a comprehensive programme consisting of capacity building, knowledge base development and awareness raising will be implemented in collaboration with the Social Development and Human Security Office (SDHSO). Among the activities, the project will support the establishment of a database center, to log information relative to the supply and demand for trafficked individuals. The center will be managed by the SDHSO, supervising a team of 100 data collectors and 30 data entry staff.

With the collaboration of local media, a training and awareness raising campaign about human trafficking will be launched including a series of TV, radio and newspaper advertisements designed to counter the demand and supply of labour and sexual exploitation. A series of community-based trafficking prevention meetings will also be held, leading to a 'community watch-dog' programme to guard against human trafficking.

In Phayao, a comprehensive programme of capacity building, knowledge base development and awareness raising will be implemented in collaboration with the Phayao Operating Center for Children and Women Victims of Human Trafficking under the Provincial Office of Social Development and Human Security. Here a database will also be established and three district and one provincial hot-line centers will be set up. The hot-lines will provide advice and counseling to young callers and a coordination system will be in place from the beginning to ensure rescued victims of trafficking are referred to the appropriate local services without delay.

The ILO-IPEC-TICW project is deeply committed to the direct participation of children and youth in the fight against trafficking, and approximately 4,500 school age children and youths in Phayao Province will be involved in peer group discussions and cascade training (Peer to Peer) about ways to prevent trafficking. Skills training and micro finance schemes will also be provided to families at high risk of trafficking.

For further information, please contact:

Ms. Kusumal Rachawong
ILO-IPEC-TICW
National Project Coordinator
Tel: 01 601 0311 or 053 772 022
E-Mail: ticwcr@csloxinfo.com

Mr. Allan Dow
ILO-IPEC-TICW
Sub-regional Communications Officer
Tel: 09 891 5003 or 02 288 2057
E-Mail: dow@ilo.org