**UN-ACT Regional Launch**

May 19th, 2014 - Bangkok, Thailand

**Upcoming Events**

**June 3rd – 5th** – Bali Process RSO Training on “Enhancing a Victim-Centered Approach”
Jeju Island, South Korea
(Contact: hamish.wyatt@rsoc.baliprocess.net – Bali Process)

**June 20th** – Alliance Anti-Trafiic 10th Anniversary Open House and Panel Discussion
Bangkok, Thailand
(Contact: communication@allianceantitrafic.org – AAT)

**June 24th – 25th** – UN-ACT Regional Network Meeting
Bangkok, Thailand
(Contact: annette.e.lyth@undp.org – UN-ACT)

**June 26th – 27th** – ICRC Consultative Roundtable on Victim Protection Aspects
Singapore
(Contact: semoretti@icrc.org – ICRC)

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**UN-ACT** aims to ensure a coordinated approach to strategically and effectively combat trafficking in persons in the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS)

**Facebook**: www.facebook.com/NoTrafficking
**Instagram**: www.instagram.com/UNACT
Trafficking Trends and Developments

CAMBODIA

- **UN-ACT Launch**: The UN-ACT national project was officially launched in Cambodia on May 6th. The launch was attended by approximately 80 participants including government officials, UN staff and representatives from civil society organisations and academia.

- **Victim Identification**: The Cambodian Victim Identification and Referral Guidelines are close to being finalised and pilot tested following a consultation workshop in March.

CHINA

- **Victim Assistance**: UN-ACT worked with World Vision and the Fujian (South China) Provincial Police Department to interview a potential marriage trafficking victim from Cambodia. With assistance from an interpreter, Fujian police identified five Cambodian women as trafficking victims lured to China by a Khmer speaking woman and forced to marry Chinese men. At the request of Fujian Police authorities, UN-ACT China office is working with UN-ACT Cambodia office to verify facts, locate the suspect and facilitate the return and reintegration of those victims wishing to return home.

- **NGO Capacity Building**: Technical support was provided to a local NGO: Baby Back Home. Chinese government officials, UN-ACT and World Vision participated in training approximately 150 volunteers from 9 provinces and cities and educating them in regards to various forms of human trafficking in China.

LAO PDR

- **Strategic Planning**: The Australia-Asia Program to Combat Trafficking in Persons (AAPTIP) conducted a strategic planning workshop with the Lao government. The meeting concluded an agreement in principle of a five-year cooperative work plan.

MYANMAR

- **UN-ACT Launch**: The UN-ACT national project was officially launched in Myanmar on May 26th. The event was attended by approximately 50 representatives from various agencies, embassies, NGOs and other organisations committed to the fight against human trafficking.

- **Victim Assistance**: The Information Center for Trafficked Persons was opened on May 27th as part of a joint project between the Department of Social Welfare, the Myanmar Police Force and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). With the financial support of the Japanese embassy, the Kawthaung temporary shelter for trafficked victims was also officially established in Shwe Pyi Soe Village, with an opening ceremony held in late April.

THAILAND

- **UN-ACT Launch**: The UN-ACT national project was officially launched in Thailand on May 19th in conjunction with the Regional Launch of UN-ACT. The event was attended by government officials, UN staff, NGO and civil society representatives, donors and other partners involved in the fight against human trafficking.
- **Children Rescued**: Thai police rescued 23 Cambodian children during a raid in Pattaya. The children were forced to work as beggars in entertainment areas. Six Thai men and one Cambodian woman were taken into custody with investigators stating that the perpetrators were part of a Thai-Cambodian network engaging in the trafficking of poor and disabled children from Cambodia to be exploited in Thailand.

- The **Saphan Siang Youth Ambassadors** volunteer programme started in late March of this year. Twelve exceptional students were paired with civil society organisations across Thailand to work on specific volunteer placements, all leading to the promotion of a positive image of migrant workers. On International Labour Day this year, two *Saphan Siang* Youth Ambassadors were active with their host organisation in Chiang Mai. Kanokwan Mungkalasawat (Fai) and Boonnian Na Thalang (Mai) joined MAP Foundation in organising a three-day event entitled "May Day Migrant Labour Conference: Proper Social Welfare for Work".

The two joined hundreds of migrant workers and their supporters coming from North to South in the march to the provincial hall. A statement was made to the governor, outlining the need to ratify ILO Conventions 87 and 98 (to promote the rights to organise and to negotiate and collective bargaining among all workers), along with other demands for rights protection: revoking repatriation funds, ensuring minimum wage, and providing equal rights to migrant workers.

To learn more about *Saphan Siang* Youth Ambassadors’ volunteer placements assisting migrant workers, you can follow their blogs at [http://saphansiangambassadors.wordpress.com](http://saphansiangambassadors.wordpress.com) or like their Facebook page [https://www.facebook.com/saphansiang?fref=ts](https://www.facebook.com/saphansiang?fref=ts)

### VIET NAM

- **UN-ACT launch**: The UN-ACT national project was officially launched in Vietnam on May 13th. The event was attended by over 60 representatives from government ministries, embassies, UN agencies, international organizations and civil society.

- **Anti-trafficking initiative**: Samaritan's Purse has been working in Viet Nam for 18 years and is now contributing to the fight against human trafficking. The international NGO is now engaging in prevention activities as well as providing assistance services to women and children in the two northern provinces of Lai Chau and Lao Cai.
NEWS UPDATES

Human traffickers hunt Vietnamese poor ethnic women for China

“Giang Thi Do returned to her village in early February after a fake marriage proposal led her all the way to China.”  
(Thanh Nien News)

Traffickers pull tribal women into China for husbands, work

“Dozens of women from remote villages in the central province of Nghe An are believed to have left home for husbands or work in China, either on their own accord or as a result of being trafficked.”  
(Thanh Nien News)

Inside the Scarily Lucrative Business Model of Human Trafficking

“Though many people believe slavery to be a thing from the distant past or award-winning movies, new figures out from the International Labor Organization (ILO) suggest that human trafficking… is a growth business.”  
(Time)

JICA sponsors hotline to fight human trafficking

“An anti-human trafficking hotline sponsored by the Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA) will open next week in An Giang Province, which shares a 100-kilometre long border with Cambodia.”  
(Viet Nam News)

Poor trafficking record “inaccurate”

“Thailand has defended itself against an American professor’s allegations that the kingdom has a poor human trafficking record, saying the information presented to the United States’ House Committee on Foreign Affairs late last month was incomplete and out of date.”  
(Bangkok Post)

Thailand as a regional haven for human trafficking

“Throughout the past five months, a total of 426 asylum seekers from Central Asia landed in various parts of Thailand. These new arrivals were unusual and different from the Rohingya arriving in boats from the Andaman Sea, a pattern set over the past few years.”  
(The Nation)

Charges for 5 in China bride case

“Three Cambodian women and two Chinese men were charged in court yesterday over allegations they brought seven young women from provincial areas to Phnom Penh in preparation to send them to China to be married.”  
(Phnom Penh Post)

Lawmakers Press Obama Administration on Human Trafficking

“U.S. lawmakers called on the Obama administration on Tuesday to punish countries that do too little to fight human trafficking, including Thailand and Malaysia, and said Myanmar should not receive a waiver to avoid possible sanctions over its record.”  
(Huffington Post)

Court Finds Four Guilty in Two Human Trafficking Cases

“Judge Kor Vandy heard the case of Lim Heng Huot, 43, Phum Sapha, 60 and Chhai Chanthou, 39, who were arrested and charged in December with trafficking women to China as brides.”  
(Cambodia Daily)

Broker ‘sold teen girls’ virginity’

“The two Poipet town families filed a complaint on May 17, alleging a local woman had kidnapped their daughters and threatened to kill them if they told anyone of the forced prostitution.”  
(Phnom Penh Post)
Regional migrant workers declaration behind schedule

“Labour officials say ASEAN is unlikely to meet the end-of-year deadline for the implementation of the Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers, with barely half of the declaration completed.” (Myanmar Times)

Amid media scrutiny, government halts maids to Hong Kong

“[The] Singapore domestic worker market is an unregulated broker market ... and the abuse of Myanmar domestic workers in Singapore real and concerning,” agreed Mr Hall.” (Myanmar Times)

Somaly Mam: The Holy Saint (and Sinner) of Sex Trafficking

“She has done so much for so many, does it matter that key parts of her story aren’t true?” (Newsweek)

Sex slaves lured to Australia by feigned love, report finds

“The wives come mainly from Asia, the Pacific, the Middle East and Eastern Europe...their prospects of being assaulted sexually and physically are so serious that Filipino women are six times more likely to be a homicide victims than all women in Australia.” (Daily Telegraph)

Modern-day slavery a $150bn-a-year business – UN report

“The report by the International Labour Organization (ILO), which draws on information gathered in a 2012 survey, also found that annual profits stemming from forced labor are three times higher than previous estimates.” (RT)

Disclaimer:

Please note that the views and opinions expressed in the above news articles do not express the views and opinions of UN-ACT or any of its affiliated agencies or partners.
MONTHLY FOCUS:

(Re)integration of Trafficked Persons

The experiences endured by trafficked persons range in severity; for many though these can be devastating and difficult to overcome. In some instances, they leave long-lasting scars, both physically and emotionally, which may not heal even once the victim has reached a safe haven. Conversely, many trafficked persons do not suffer from severe forms of trauma and abuse, and require far less assistance during their recovery, or may have different needs altogether. Such variations in experiences and resilience need to be taken into account when designing programmes or policies of support to trafficked persons.

Different forms of assistance are required to support trafficked persons in regaining their autonomy, recovering from the effects of trafficking and rebuilding their lives. Government and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) play a key role in assisting trafficked persons to successfully recover and (re)integrate, and must therefore be responsive to their individual needs, including changes in these needs over time. Along with safe and voluntary return, or support in relocation, effective planning for arrival in new surroundings is also essential. The provision of shelter, legal support, counseling and vocational training may facilitate the (re)integration process, and therefore reduce the likelihood of individuals falling victim to re-trafficking.

Many trafficked persons decline assistance or have difficulties with the assistance provided, and this in turn affects their ability to (re)integrate. In many cases, traffickers target individuals from marginalized and excluded social groups, making it very difficult for such persons to ‘reintegrate’, and impacting their recovery. It is critical to conduct thorough needs assessments, involving the beneficiaries themselves, to further identify whether trafficked persons would be better served by returning to their former communities, or being rehabilitated in a new environment.

Taking an overview of victim protection, (re)integration systems and support services, it remains clear that improvements are needed to support trafficked persons at a range of levels, from initial identification and protection through to the longer term services required. With repatriation a significant part of the process, there is a clear need to increase cross-border collaboration in providing support to trafficked persons. In both the short and long term there are various challenges and potential setbacks that may affect a person’s recovery, and it cannot be assumed that recovery is a linear process. Such challenges need to be understood in the overall programming and support of trafficked persons.
Considerable efforts have been made in recent years to implement interventions that respond to the needs of trafficked persons and to improve the opportunities available for them to (re)integrate. Our understanding of the success of these programmes, through monitoring and evaluation, must come from the experiences of trafficked persons whom they seek to support. It is imperative that we continue to develop interventions based on successful models, recognize where interventions need to be improved and further develop (re)integration programmes as a result.

As noted by Rebecca Surtees, “this is by no means a homogenous group with similar trajectories through trafficking, similar priorities or aspirations afterward or even similar understandings of whether or not they have been victimised.” However, this should not deter efforts to build upon the previous efforts of governments, civil society, and individuals who continue to search for holistic strategies and comprehensive methods to improve the lives and opportunities of trafficked persons. Their assisted transitions into sustainable livelihoods, free of trafficking threats is an important humanitarian goal, and an essential component of anti-trafficking work.

**Common Challenges in Victim Reintegration**

- Victims may suffer from numerous psychological, health, familial, legal, and financial problems
- Trafficked persons are often without personal identification documents (passports, citizenship)
- Victims may be subjected to severe prejudicial attitudes and social alienation as a result of their experiences and/or their inability to financially provide for relatives
- Employment opportunities may be limited upon reintegration and compounded by low wages
- Difficulties in adjusting to life after exploitation may leave victims vulnerable to re-trafficking
- Familial relationships may be altered by feelings of guilt, shame, confusion and helplessness among all parties
- Victims may suffer from trafficking related illnesses including STI’s, drug and/or alcohol abuse coupled with a lack of appropriate medical facilities to provide treatment
- Significant fear of retaliation by traffickers may accompany reintegration if victims were involved with criminal organizations
- Social, ethnic and linguistic disconnect from their new surroundings

**Common Best Practices in Victim Reintegration**

- Stigma alleviation focus incorporated into reintegration programs
- Comprehensive risk assessments including readiness and willingness of communities/societies to accept victims
- Available vocational opportunities upon reintegration
- Counseling assistance with a specific focus on potential or existing shame, alienation, depression or trauma
- Access to fundamental human rights visibly available at all stages of the return and reintegration process
- Unlimited access to consular and diplomatic services
- Primary health care and shelter that is not contingent upon co-operation with authorities
- Victim consent at all stages via an open dialogue with a translator where applicable
- Partnership with a civil society organization to perform as an intermediary in the repatriation process
- Immediate temporary arrival assistance (including housing, finances, etc.)
- Microenterprise as a model of foreign reintegration and rehabilitation

**References:**
- Surtees - After Trafficking: Experiences and challenges in the (re)integration of trafficked persons in the Greater Mekong Sub-region (2013).
- UNIAP, IOM & Save the Children - Training manual for combating trafficking in women and children (2001)
FEATURED PUBLICATION

After Trafficking:
Experiences and Challenges in the (Re)integration of Trafficked Persons in the Greater Mekong Sub-region

Authored by Rebecca Surtees,
Commissioned by the governments of the COMMIT countries,
Prepared by the NEXUS Institute with support from UNIAP, and UN and civil society partners

“Trafficked persons throughout the GMS region have suffered diverse and often very complex and traumatic trafficking experiences. Many of these individuals have received a range of assistance and support in their post-trafficking lives, in order to help them overcome and move on from their experiences. Many trafficked persons have experienced very positive post-trafficking pathways including successful, long term (re)integrations. Much can be learned from these experiences and “successes” in the design of future (re)integration programming and policies...

In spite of these important successes, too many trafficked persons had far less positive post-trafficking experiences and were not provided (re)integration support and assistance that might have been central in recovering and (re)integrating after trafficking. One significant finding of this research was that the (re)integration process does not always run smoothly, or in accordance to the standards and principles drafted at the national or international level. Much can be garnered from these less successful experiences. Of particular importance is how to use these negative experiences to improve and enhance future work on the (re)integration of trafficked persons. These findings are a starting point for moving forward in this direction.”

- Rebecca Surtees

A full copy of the text can be found online at:
Nexus Institute
COMMIT

Hard copies of the publication can be picked up at any of the six COMMIT member country offices
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"With the official launch of our new project last month, UN-ACT will be distributing a monthly newsletter to all our anti-trafficking partners and interested parties. Our goal is to provide regional updates on trafficking in persons in the GMS, including new trends and developments, upcoming workshops, conferences and activities, news updates, as well as keeping readers informed about our latest work in the field. We welcome any feedback you may have in regards to the content, as well as suggestions on what you would like to see included in the future. We hope that you find our newsletter informative and enlightening, and we look forward to working with you all in the future!"

Annette Lyth
UN-ACT Regional Project Manager