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USAID LAOS COUNTER TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

The Laos Counter Trafficking in Persons program (USAID Laos CTIP), a seven-year project funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), works to reduce the vulnerability to human trafficking among targeted populations in Laos by raising awareness, supporting vocational training and creating linkages to employment opportunities.

Laos is a source and, to a lesser extent, transit and destination country for women, children and men subjected to human trafficking. Lao migrant workers and trafficking victims who go abroad to seek job opportunities, especially from the southern region of the country, often experience labor or sexual exploitation in the destination countries. In the northern region, there is an increasing trend where Lao women are being taken to China for fake marriages and then suffer from sexual exploitation and forced labor within Lao Special Economic Zones.

REDUCING VULNERABILITY

USAID Laos CTIP works with the Government of Laos and local partners from central to local levels to reduce the vulnerability to human trafficking among targeted populations. The project raises awareness and supports vocational training and employment opportunities for vulnerable populations, particularly those living in remote and border areas, as well as survivors of human trafficking to prevent re-trafficking. These efforts showcase a model of prevention and protection for the Government of Laos to learn from, and effectively combat human trafficking through the implementation of related national laws, policies and programs, as well as providing high quality support services to trafficked persons. USAID Laos CTIP complements the Government of Laos' ongoing initiatives to respond to human trafficking. The project currently targets four provinces, Vientiane Capital, Savannakhet, Salavan, and Champasak, and plans to extend its operations to the North in the coming years.

IMPACTS AND RESULTS

- Enhanced knowledge among Counter Trafficking In Person (CTIP) IP officers at all levels, the project trained up to 480 people in 10 Child Protection Networks (CPN). CPN is comprised of village authorities, teachers, and law enforcement officers on TIP prevention. The project also educated over 100 youth groups members on the same topic. These trainings helped these local TIP front liners and youth groups to better identify risks and methods of trafficking and exploitation, so that they can detect trafficking incidents and provide preventative measures in their communities.
- Enhanced coordination between the government and non-government stakeholders, In collaboration with the National Secretariat and Anti-trafficking Department, the project convened a multi-stakeholder consultation on the Laos National Plan of Action on Anti-Human Trafficking (2021-2025). The meeting enabled both sides to share a vision and mutually understand each other's roles and joint efforts needed to combat trafficking in persons in Laos.
- Assisted returned labor migrants and other vulnerable individuals, including those impacted by COVID-19, gaining skills for economic empowerment through provision of vocational/livelihood and soft skills training. To date, 174 at risk people and TIP victims (109 female) have received livelihood and/or soft skills training.
- Enhanced knowledge of CTIP stakeholders, the project conducted workshops on prevention of child and sex tourism and trafficking in collaboration with Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism (MICT) to raise awareness of private tourism stakeholders on TIP issues, leading to the production of prevention posters to raise awareness among the public, particularly tourists. Another joint workshop with MICT on TIP prevention and relevant legislations designated for the media enabled this sector to realize the critical role of media in prevention. Workshops for education stakeholders in target provinces created an opportunity for teachers to consider how best to reach out to students and protect them from exploitation. These efforts enabled front line workers, government officials, private sector and social workers to understand the risks, increase collaboration and embrace their roles in helping to prevent human rights abuses.
- Raised public awareness on prevention of and protection from TIP and gender-based violence (GBV) through events such as the 16 Days of Activism Campaign. Such actions included an awareness campaign in garment factories and a talk show on TIP issues on livestream through social media. In 2021, the project collaborated with 10 Lao celebrities including Miss Universe Laos and fashion designers through a video campaign on social media, gaining massive viewerships. This approach successfully drew the attention of youth and celebrity followers on trafficking and GBV issues, many of whom might not normally show interest otherwise.

PARTNER: USAID partners with Winrock International and the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare (on behalf of the National Secretariat on Anti Human Trafficking) in Laos to prevent and reduce vulnerability of Lao populations to human trafficking and labor exploitation.

For more information visit www.usaid.gov/laos or contact: laosinfo@usaid.gov