



International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC)



International
Labour
Office

IPEC Evaluation

Reducing Labour Exploitation for Children and Women : Combating Trafficking in the Greater Mekong Sub- region. Phase II

**RAS/03/P04/UKM
P270.03.300.004**

**An independent mid-term evaluation by a team of external
consultants**

Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Thailand, Vietnam

September 2006

This document has not been professionally edited.

NOTE ON THE EVALUATION PROCESS AND REPORT

This independent evaluation was managed by ILO-IPEC's Design, Evaluation and Documentation Section (DED) following a consultative and participatory approach. DED has ensured that all major stakeholders were consulted and informed throughout the evaluation and that the evaluation was carried out to highest degree of credibility and independence and in line with established evaluation standards.

The evaluation was carried out a team of external consultants¹. The field mission took place in September 2006. The opinions and recommendations included in this report are those of the authors and as such serve as an important contribution to learning and planning without necessarily constituting the perspective of the ILO or any other organization involved in the project.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	II
1 INTRODUCTION TO THE REPORT	1
1.1 Brief overview of the project	1
1.2 Purpose and scope of the mid-term evaluation (MTE).....	2
1.3 Methods used during the MTE	2
1.3.1 Peer Group.....	3
1.3.2 Documentation consulted	4
1.3.3 General caveats concerning the evaluation.....	4
2 PROJECT DESIGN.....	6
2.1 The project’s context	6
2.2 Developments since 2003 affecting the project and which have led to changes in the project .7	
2.2.1 The development of COMMIT in 2004 and 2005	7
2.2.2 A new ILO-IPEC project to prevent human trafficking in five other provinces of China..8	
2.2.3 Effects of Phase 1 of the project which have been taken into account while implementing Phase 2	8
2.3 Recommendations from evaluations of Phase 1 of the project (mid-term review and final evaluation)	9
2.3.1 Recommendations from the MTE of Phase 1 (February 2002).....	9
2.3.2 Recommendations from the Final Evaluation of Phase 1 (June 2003)	9
2.4 Project redesign in late 2004 – revising the Immediate Objectives.....	10
2.4.1 Design issues which remain after the 2004 revision of the Immediate Objectives – concerning ‘influencing’ people and awareness raising	12
2.4.2 Appropriateness of the project’s indicators	12
2.5 The relationship between the project and other child labour and child-trafficking interventions supported by IPEC or by other organizations working the Greater Mekong Sub-region.....	15
2.5.1 UN Trust Fund for Human Security funded project “Prevention of Trafficking in Children and Women at a Community Level in Cambodia and Vietnam”	15
2.5.2 Project to Prevent Trafficking in Girls and Young Women for Labour exploitation within China (CP-TING project)	16
2.5.3 Combating Child Trafficking for Labour and Sexual Exploitation (TICSA).....	16
2.5.4 The Time-Bound Programme (TBP) to eliminate the worst forms of child labour in Cambodia.....	17
2.5.5 Other related ILO and IPEC country programmes	17
2.5.6 Other ILO programmes combating human trafficking	17
2.5.7 Initiatives by other organizations.....	17
3 THE RELEVANCE OF THE PROJECT’S OBJECTIVES, THEMES AND STRATEGY.....	19
3.1 The relevance of the project’s focus on women and children	19
3.1.1 Focusing on young adults as well as children.....	19
3.1.2 The gender aspect – the relevance of promoting gender equality.....	20
3.2 The relevance of focusing on labour exploitation rather than sexual exploitation	20
3.3 Situating trafficking in women and children (TICW) within the broader migration framework and aiming to make migration safer	21
3.3.1 Avoiding moving the focus too far from ‘trafficking’ to ‘migration’	22
3.4 Taking a preventive approach.....	23
3.5 The project’s emphasis on the demand for trafficked labour (the destination side)	23
3.6 The project’s focus on participatory approaches	24

3.7	The project’s sub-regional framework.....	26
3.7.1	Synergies between the project and other initiatives in the Mekong Region.....	27
3.7.1.1	The synergies with sub-regional inter-governmental processes (COMMIT).....	28
3.7.1.2	A special relationship with Save the Children–United Kingdom (SCUK).....	28
4	THE PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTING THE PROJECT.....	30
4.1	The ILO’s ‘comparative advantage’ in relation to other organizations implementing projects or programmes to stop human trafficking.....	30
4.2	The TICW project’s timeframe.....	32
4.3	Coordination with other actors involved in combating human trafficking in South East Asia.....	32
4.4	Administrative or management issues which have affected the project’s implementation.....	37
4.4.1	Issues arising in the course of the implementation of the project with partners.....	37
4.4.2	Internal management and administrative issues within the TICW project.....	38
4.4.2.1	Staff training.....	39
4.4.2.2	Overall management of the project.....	40
4.4.2.3	Management issues which have arisen in the Lao PDR.....	41
5	PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AT SUB-REGIONAL LEVEL – PERFORMANCE AND ACHIEVEMENTS.....	42
5.1	Policy making/Capacity Building.....	42
5.1.1	Coherence at sub-regional level resulting from coordination with other anti-trafficking initiatives in the sub-region.....	42
5.1.2	The reestablishment of the SURAC in 2005.....	42
5.2	Advocacy and Mobilization.....	44
5.2.1	Progress in involving the social partners (employers’ and workers’ organizations).....	44
5.2.2	Mobilizing the project’s intended beneficiaries – The Mekong Children’s Forum: an example of ‘good practice’ for the ILO and IPEC to replicate.....	44
5.3	Direct Assistance (revolving credit).....	46
5.4	Opportunities offered by the project’s sub-regional structure which do not appear to have been used yet.....	47
5.4.1	Cross-border patterns of trafficking.....	47
5.4.2	Establishing links between stakeholders concerned about different ends of the same trafficking flow.....	47
5.4.3	Five separate country projects?.....	48
6	PERFORMANCE AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE FIVE COUNTRIES.....	49
6.1	Cambodia.....	49
6.1.1	Summary.....	49
6.1.2	Direct assistance.....	49
6.1.3	Capacity building.....	50
6.1.4	Advocacy and awareness raising.....	52
6.1.5	Knowledge base.....	53
6.1.6	Sustainability.....	53
6.2	China (Yunnan Province).....	54
6.2.1	Summary.....	54
6.2.2	Capacity building.....	55
6.2.3	Knowledge base.....	56
6.2.4	Advocacy and awareness raising.....	58
6.2.5	Direct assistance.....	58
6.2.5.1	Promoting alternative livelihoods in rural communities.....	58
6.2.5.2	Encouraging adolescent girls from ethnic minorities to attend secondary school.....	59
6.2.5.3	Encouraging children and young people to be aware of the risk of being trafficked.....	60

6.2.5.4	Making employers and others aware of trafficking in order to reduce demand for trafficked labour.....	61
6.2.5.5	Providing support for ‘Women’s Homes’ (social centres for women and girls).....	61
6.2.6	The knock-on effects of the TICW project in China	62
6.2.7	Sustainability of the TICW project in China	63
6.3	Lao PDR	63
6.3.1	Summary.....	63
6.3.2	Direct assistance	63
6.3.2.1	Impact of the VDF.....	64
6.3.3	Capacity building.....	66
6.3.4	Knowledge base.....	68
6.3.5	Advocacy and awareness raising	68
6.3.6	Sustainability	69
6.4	Thailand.....	70
6.4.1	Summary.....	70
6.4.2	Capacity building.....	71
6.4.2.1	Phayao Province and two other provinces in northern Thailand	72
6.4.3	Knowledge base.....	73
6.4.4	Advocacy and awareness raising	74
6.4.5	Direct assistance	75
6.4.5.1	‘Source’ areas in Northern Thailand.....	76
6.4.5.2	Destination areas in Central Thailand.....	77
6.4.6	Sustainability	77
6.5	Viet Nam.....	78
6.5.1	Summary.....	78
6.5.2	Capacity building.....	81
6.5.3	Knowledge base.....	82
6.5.4	Advocacy and awareness raising	82
6.5.5	Direct assistance	83
6.5.6	Sustainability	84
6.5.7	Conclusion concerning Viet Nam.....	84
7	SUSTAINABILITY	85
7.1	The Sub-Regional Level.....	85
7.2	Phasing out the project’s involvement in providing direct assistance	85
7.3	The need for a phase out strategy	86
8	SPECIAL ASPECTS.....	87
8.1	Participation: the project’s effectiveness at promoting participation of stakeholders and beneficiaries and local ownership of the project	87
8.1.1	Local ownership and participation of stakeholders	87
8.1.2	Participation of beneficiaries	87
8.1.3	Potential advantages of enhanced participation.....	89
8.2	Monitoring Tools and Impact Assessment	89
8.2.1	Systems for reporting, monitoring and evaluation.....	89
8.2.2	Participatory Monitoring (and Evaluation) Tools.....	90
8.2.3	Evidence about the impact of the project in terms of preventing human trafficking.....	94
8.2.4	The importance of assessing the impact of direct assistance to increase income or to promote income-generating activities.....	94
8.2.5	Developing tracing or tracking methods.....	94
8.3	Promoting good practice.....	95
8.3.1	IPEC procedures for identifying good practice	96
8.3.2	Criteria identified by others for assessing good practice	96

8.3.3	Recommendations to the TICW project concerning the process for identifying and ‘validating’ good practice	98
8.3.4	Lessons learnt about ways of preventing trafficking and potential for replication.....	98
8.3.5	Providing direct assistance and identifying ‘good practice’	99
8.3.5.1	Project activities to enable rural households to generate more income	99
8.3.5.2	Life skills education.....	100
8.3.5.3	Information about trafficking made available to children and young adults, including ‘study visits’ to cities for young village dwellers	101
8.4	Replicability.....	101
8.4.1	The learning process within IPEC	101
8.4.1.1	Increasing the exchange of information about experiences within the TICW project	102
8.4.2	Lessons learnt with regard to ‘process’	102
8.4.2.1	Was ‘provincial level’ a key entry point?.....	103
8.4.2.2	Have (national) Women’s Federations been a key entry point?	103
8.5	Strengths and weaknesses of project interventions which are relevant to future anti-trafficking interventions	104
8.5.1	Meeting challenges and taking advantage of new opportunities	104
8.5.2	Developing direct assistance strategies to discourage ‘demand’ (for trafficked persons) 104	
8.5.3	Knowledge Base	105
8.5.4	Advocacy and Mobilization.....	106
8.5.4.1	Mobilizing government officials to take action to prevent trafficking – both in areas of recruitment and areas of exploitation.....	106
8.5.4.2	Mobilizing the social partners (employers’ and workers’ organizations).....	107
8.5.4.3	Mobilizing the project’s intended beneficiaries – women and children	109
8.6	Lessons learnt concerning relationships with international agencies and national organizations involved in anti-trafficking and related activities	109
8.7	TICW’s relationship with DFID	110
9	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	111
9.1	Coherence, focus and priorities	111
9.2	Participation.....	112
9.2.1	Participation at the design stage.....	112
9.2.2	Participatory Monitoring Tools	112
9.3	Knowledge base – improving knowledge of the characteristics of individuals who are disproportionately at risk of being trafficked (and of their households)	113
9.4	Advocacy	113
9.5	Direct Assistance	113
9.6	Impact assessment	114
9.7	The identification of ‘good practice’	115
9.8	The project’s management.....	115
9.9	Staff training	116
9.10	Recommendations concerning Cambodia	117
9.11	Recommendations concerning China (Yunnan Province).....	117
9.12	Recommendations concerning Lao PDR.....	118
9.13	Recommendations concerning Thailand.....	119
9.14	Recommendations concerning Viet Nam	119
9.15	Conclusion	119

Abbreviations and Acronyms used in the report

ACWF	All-China Women's Federation
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
COMMIT	Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking
CSTC	Cambodia's Child Safe Tourism Commission
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
DED	Design, Evaluation and Documentation Section of IPEC
DfID	United Kingdom's Department for International Development
DSEP	Department of Social Evils Prevention in Viet Nam's MOLISA
GMS	Greater Mekong Sub-region
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPEC	ILO's International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour
ISED	Integrated Support to Small Enterprise Development
KWCD	Khmer Women's Cooperation for Development
Lao PDR	Lao People's Democratic Republic
MOLISA	Viet Nam's Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSDHS	Thailand's Ministry for Social Development and Human Security
MTE	Mid-term review
OVI	Objectively verifiable indicator
PSOE	Participatory Stakeholder Ownership Exercise
PM	Participative Monitoring (and Evaluation)
SCREAM	Supporting Children's Rights through Education, the Arts and the Media (one of IPEC's initiatives to stop child labour)
SEED	ILO InFocus Programme on Boosting Employment Through Small Enterprise Development
SCUK	Save the Children United Kingdom
SURAC	Sub-Regional Advisory Committee
TIA	Technical Intervention Area
ToT	Training of Trainers
TPR	IPEC Technical Progress Report
UNIAP	United Nations Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking
VDF	Village Development Funds
WEDGE	Women's Entrepreneurship Development and Gender Equality

Executive Summary

In March 2006 two evaluators visited five countries in which the ILO-IPEC Mekong Sub-regional Project to Combat Trafficking in Children and Women (TICW project) is being implemented. The project covers a large area in the Greater Mekong Sub-Region (GMS) and is notable because of its long duration: enough time is available to show that certain interventions do or do not prevent human trafficking from occurring.

The evaluation team found that the project was of obvious relevance in a sub-region where large numbers of people are migrating and many migrants are being trafficked. They noted that few other agencies were focusing their attention on preventing human trafficking and that the TICW project had made significant achievements, both in mobilizing governments to take action to prevent children and women from being trafficked and in organizing practical efforts at local level to decrease the likelihood that trafficking will occur (efforts referred to in this project as ‘direct assistance’). This makes the TICW project’s contribution important and, above all, means that the lessons it is learning, both positive and negative, are extremely important in the sub-region and also elsewhere, both for their immediate effect and for others to learn from, as few other anti-trafficking initiatives focus so specifically on the prevention side.

At sub-regional level the project is not the only actor, nor even the main one, and must subordinate its initiatives to the GMS States’ own process for responding to human trafficking: the Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking (COMMIT) process for which the Bangkok-based United Nations Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking (UNIAP) functions as the secretariat. This means that the project has had to adapt to changes outside its control and sometimes outside its influence (because the COMMIT involves the Government of Myanmar, which per ILO resolution of the 87th Session (June 1999) of the International Labour Conference on the widespread use of forced labour in Myanmar, should cease to benefit from any technical cooperation or assistance from the ILO until such time as it has implemented the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry). This has placed the project at a disadvantage, but the project has nevertheless been able to take advantage of the COMMIT process to move some of its objectives forward.

Despite the existence of the COMMIT and its secretariat, there is still a lack of good coordination between governments and within individual governments (i.e. a lack of coordination between different government departments) and between different inter-governmental organizations. Nor surprisingly, the TICW project is not in a position to resolve this problem by itself, although addressing it will continue to require the TICW project’s attention and time.

Project activities are well underway in four of the five project countries. The evaluators were impressed by the enthusiasm and dedication of the project staff responsible for initiating and maintaining these. In the fifth country, Viet Nam, there was a two-year delay in approving the start of the project and it is not likely that the project can achieve its objectives. This means that a quite different process for deciding on the priorities and re-planning the project is necessary in Viet Nam.

The ILO evidently has a series of comparative advantages in implementing this project in comparison to many other agencies. These include:

- Many other agencies support initiatives to enhance law enforcement and arrest traffickers and to enable trafficked women and children to recover and restart their lives. However, few others focus specifically on the *prevention* of trafficking in the GMS sub-region (or elsewhere).
- Many of the organizations which do try to prevent trafficking have limited their efforts to disseminating information about the risks associated with trafficking ('awareness raising'), whereas the ILO and the TICW project have tried out a range of other methods. This is particularly important, as awareness raising efforts around the world have failed to produce the benefits initially expected of them and it is consequently important to learn how effective other techniques are. Furthermore, other organizations engaged in prevention work have focused exclusively on 'sending areas' (where people are recruited by traffickers, or from which people migrate who subsequently come under the control of traffickers), whereas Phase 2 of the TICW project has developed preventive techniques in 'receiving areas' (i.e. the areas to which people are trafficked) as well.
- The TICW project is making linkages between human trafficking and the issue of migration, enabling the authorities in various countries to implement activities to prevent trafficking in the context of mass rural-urban migration.
- The TICW project focuses on ways of protecting the rights of people in the world of work more than other agencies involved in combating trafficking, which tend to focus more narrowly on girls and women trafficked into forced prostitution.
- The TICW project is engaged in efforts to prevent trafficking at community and local level, unlike most other international agencies. Although this might be viewed by donors and others as getting involved at an inappropriate level (instead of concentrating on influencing central government policy), the evaluators consider that this gives TICW and the ILO experience which is invaluable when it comes to assessing which preventive measures should be mainstreamed as government policy.
- In addition to advocating respect for international legal standards (the ILO conventions), the TICW project works closely with governments, demonstrating how such standards can be implemented. It is able to access and mobilize high levels of government and has credibility with donor governments and the governments of the countries it works in.
- In addition to having access to governments, the ILO's tripartite structure has enabled the TICW project to mobilize employers' and workers' organizations and to involve them in efforts to improve labour migration management.
- The project's publications are high quality and professionally produced in a good format.
- The TICW project has deployed professional expertise on the issue of micro-finance (and probably has more relevant expertise than many other agencies which support micro-finance initiatives to prevent trafficking or to prevent people from having to migrate in vulnerable circumstances).
- The ILO has experience of looking at how demand for cheap (or free) labour results in abuse and of what measures can be taken to reduce such demand, which is being used by the TICW project in 'receiving areas'.

While Phase 1 of the TICW project focused on sending areas from which people emigrate (within their own country or to other countries) and are sometimes trafficked, Phase 2 set out to organize preventive activities in receiving areas. These activities were slow to start in receiving areas in all four of the project countries where they were planned, meaning that insufficient experience has yet been acquired to know with certainty which activities are

appropriate to mainstream as government policy. There were some good reasons for the delays (such as the need to collect sufficient information about the abuses experienced by migrants before launching activities to stop these abuses and a commitment to promote the participation of local partners in collecting such information). Direct assistance activities were supposed to come to an end in the middle of Phase 2 of the project (i.e. in 2006), but the evaluators consider that it is premature either to end the activities in destination areas or even to stop initiating new ones. Too little has been tried out and not enough learned to make decisions about what to mainstream as policy.

There has been rather more experience in sending areas, but here too it is inadvisable to bring all direct assistance activities to an end, for not enough evidence has been collected about the effects of the activities to make evidence-based decisions about what should be mainstreamed or replicated elsewhere.

The project has begun the process of identifying 'good practice' and should modify the process for doing so. There has been an assumption that subjective assessments are adequate to identify what is working well and should be categorized as 'good practice', meaning that the texts drafted about good practice mostly describe a specific activity rather than drawing conclusions about why it worked and in what circumstances it could be replicated. The evaluators felt that ILO-IPEC's usual process for identifying good practice should be supplemented by a separate 'peer review' process. This should involve consulting experts from outside the TICW project and IPEC about what to qualify as 'good practice'.

The project has been successful in most areas at building government capacity and a sense of 'local ownership' by government agencies. However, while there has been an appropriate emphasis on ensuring the participation of most stakeholders, too little attention has been given to ensuring the participation of the project's intended beneficiaries. The 'participatory monitoring tools' (PM tools) developed during Phase 1 of the project appear to be either too complicated or too expensive to use. As a result, the evaluators found little evidence that the views of the project's intended beneficiaries were being collected systematically during monitoring exercises or taken into account in the design of new programmes and activities. They felt that new techniques and procedures for ensuring this were required.

The evaluation team felt that the breadth and ambitiousness of the project, together with rapid changes in the environment in which it is being implemented, have led to it become unwieldy and difficult to manage. Consolidation is now needed, together with a focus on learning more about the techniques to prevent trafficking in 'receiving areas'. Above all, this means that the project needs better information about what it has achieved: the impact it is having on migrants and on patterns of migration and trafficking. For the remainder of the project, it should therefore give priority to collecting evidence about its effects and identifying good practice for others to replicate in future initiatives to prevent human trafficking.

Summary of findings and recommendations

1. The project needs to consolidate its activities and focus its efforts on fewer initiatives. The special 'value added' of the TICW project means that, if faced with a choice between consolidating preventive efforts in sending areas and continuing to invest in new (and relatively untested) preventive techniques in receiving areas, the priority is to test techniques in receiving areas more fully. In both cases even more priority should be given to learning lessons about what works and is appropriate to replicate.

2. As not enough attention has been given to ensuring that the project's beneficiaries participate in the project—particularly in the design of project activities and in their evaluation and the eventual modification of the activities—the project's managers should clarify what standards for participation by the project's intended beneficiaries are the minimum standards acceptable to the project (in the context of Action Programmes and other actions) and ensure that every new Action Programme proposal contains explicit information about how the project's intended beneficiaries have been involved in the design stage. The project also needs to assess whether its existing project monitoring (PM) tools are being used adequately and whether they enable beneficiaries to participate in the evaluation (as well as monitoring) of project activities, or whether they are too complicated and should be replaced.

3. The project should ensure it has an adequate understanding of the characteristics of the children and young women who are more likely to be trafficked than others who are their own age and live in the same communities, in order to target its preventive activities at such individuals in both sending and receiving areas. It could do this by identifying the factors which put some people at disproportionately higher risk than others of being trafficked. It would subsequently be possible (and desirable) to assess the impact of the project's activities on such individuals and on the factors which put them at disproportionately high risk.

4. The project should develop explicit advocacy strategies for each country, in particular for countries where it has encountered difficulties in implementing activities due to the views of specific officials or departments.

5. Although the Project Document for Phase 2 stipulates that direct assistance activities should come to an end half way through the project (i.e. in early 2006), they should be continued, particularly in destination areas where no direct assistance activities have been running for long enough to prove their worth.

6. The TICW project should work with other projects and programmes operating in the GMS sub-region that are trying to stop human trafficking, to develop ways of measuring whether the numbers being trafficked are reducing or the abuse inflicted on migrants is decreasing. It would, however, be unrealistic, half way through Phase 2 of the TICW project, to expect the project to do this alone.

Not enough evidence has been collected to know what the impact of the project's activities has been on its intended beneficiaries or its development goal. The project should track what happens to some samples of beneficiaries beyond the expected life of the TICW project (i.e. 2008) in order to assess the impact of some of its preventive activities over the longer term. This would evidently require some further funding to be made available.

In order to decide on the basis of evidence what forms of direct assistance are appropriate to replicate and to mainstream at policy level, it is essential to collect evidence even more systematically about the effects of the project's direct assistance activities, so that the activities believed to constitute good practice can be subjected to comparative analysis (between similar activities in a single country and in different countries).

7. The phrase 'good practice' should only be used in reference to activities developed by the TICW project once they have been analysed by others outside the project. The project should introduce a system of quality assurance into its learning processes, such as a peer review method for identifying 'good practice'. The phrase "emerging good practice" should not be applied to techniques which appear to have had some success, but which have not yet been subjected to adequate analysis. It is a priority to consolidate the lessons being learned

from initiatives which are similar, but based in different countries, and to subject these to a rigorous comparative analysis in order to assess what activities should be replicated.

8. A senior manager from the project should visit each of the project countries on a regular basis and check the project's strategy (i.e. that the strategies chosen at national level conform to the project's programme logic and processes), that adequate evidence is being collected about the impact of activities to assess their replicability and to help national staff resolve any problems which have come up within their programme. The CTA should consequently review the project's management structure and consider appointing a senior manager with special responsibilities for quality assurance as far as the project activities in individual countries are concerned.

9. The complexity and relative novelty of the issues with which the project is dealing mean that additional training is needed for new TICW staff at an early stage following their recruitment on issues related to trafficking, as well as on ILO structures and procedures.

The full report also contains a series of recommendations for each of the five country programmes: a total of 26 recommendations.

Map of the area covered by the TICW project, showing sites visited by the evaluators.



1 Introduction to the report

1.1 Brief overview of the project

Phase 1 of the ILO-IPEC Greater Mekong Sub-Regional Project to Combat Trafficking in Children and Women started in February 2000 and ended in April 2003. It was financed by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DfID). A second phase, lasting five years, started on 1 May 2003 and was set to run until 30 April 2008, with a budget of £6,106,715 (approximately US\$11,100,000 at April 2006 exchange rates), again provided by the United Kingdom's DfID.²

According to the evaluators' terms of reference, TICW Phase 2 is building on the documented successes of Phase 1 and contributing to the eradication of labour exploitation of children and young women in the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS). The project's logical framework for Phase 1 was developed using a thematic approach, to include:

Policy Mainstreaming, with emphasis on the labour and employment aspects of action against human trafficking—TICW Phase 2 seeks to ensure that national agendas and plans of action on human trafficking acknowledge the increased presence of trafficking for labour exploitation, significance of prevention strategies, the importance of special treatment for children, the value of consultation with affected groups;

Awareness raising and advocacy—Phase 2 places a considerable emphasis on the execution of advocacy and information campaigns to counter demand in receiving and destination areas. The advocacy ranges from mass media campaigns to group and one-on-one contact. The participatory views of children and young people play a leading role in the formulation of advocacy campaigns.

Community empowerment—In order to lessen the vulnerability related to ill-informed and unprepared migration, TICW continues to develop alternative livelihood options through carefully focused direct assistance activities in high risk areas. Successful direct assistance interventions from Phase 1 are being replicated in Phase 2 and then phased out after year 2. There is a systematic incorporation of views of the beneficiaries (including but not limited to children and young women) in the design, monitoring and evaluation of project activities.

Promotion of Safe Migration and Labour Protection at Destination—Within the frameworks of the bilateral Memoranda of Understanding to fight human trafficking and create frameworks to regularize cross-border migration, TICW Phase 2 is identifying ways to make migration 'safer' and reducing the vulnerability to human trafficking within the migration process.

The project covers an area containing far more people than most other national or regional anti-trafficking projects around the world, has a larger budget and has an exceptionally long duration compared to other projects. This gives it more opportunities to achieve its objectives than many comparable initiatives. Built into its programme logic is a process of learning: applying 'direct assistance' activities at community level, learning what works and what does not (to prevent human trafficking) and subsequently mainstreaming effective

² After the evaluators' visit, the date for the end of the project was reportedly extended from 20 April to 31 October 2008.

initiatives at policy level. This is made possible by focusing on developing the capacity of government institutions to design and organize activities to prevent trafficking themselves, at the very time that some direct assistance activities are already occurring. The process of learning from experience is consequently crucial for the project's success and implies that sufficient evidence is collected about the effects of project activities to assess which ones are worthy of replication and which ones are not.

1.2 Purpose and scope of the mid-term evaluation (MTE)

According to the consultants' terms of reference, "The purpose of the mid-term evaluation (MTE) is to review the ongoing progress and performance of the project, examine the likelihood of the project achieving its objectives, review the nature and magnitude of constraints, the factors affecting implementation and analyse factors contributing to the project's success". The scope of the MTE includes all project activities to date including Action Programmes. In addition, the MTE is intended to:

- look at how the project has responded to changes that have taken place in the past two years;
- assess the need for possible revisions of the project and suggests possible ways forward for the future;
- identify any lessons learned and emerging good practice;
- serve as a learning tool for stakeholders involved in anti-trafficking programmes in the Mekong sub-region, including the project management team;
- contribute to the broader knowledge base in the region and with key institutions operating nationally and regionally and play a role in further mobilizing efforts on the issue of human trafficking.

The project's CTA pointed out that the results of numerous efforts over the first two years of Phase 2 of TICW are just becoming apparent—"the flowers are beginning to bloom". However, in a complex and multi-faceted project she perceives a clear need to identify priorities for the coming two years and to refocus on the project's key themes. An additional purpose of the MTE is also to suggest how this can be done.

To a great extent this evaluation was about testing the project's programme logic and exploring whether the strategies it is deploying are likely to lead it to these endpoints—its 'immediate objectives' and development goal.

1.3 Methods used during the MTE

An evaluation team of two evaluators were contracted to spend an initial week reading project documents, followed by three weeks in South East Asia, with both evaluators spending time in Bangkok and visiting other parts of Thailand. One visited Cambodia and the Lao PDR, while the other visited Viet Nam and Yunnan (People's Republic of China). They were both involved in preparing the first draft of the evaluation report, but only the lead evaluator was contracted to spend more time on finalising the report and was therefore mainly involved at that stage and consequently did most of the drafting.

The two evaluators spent five days reading background documents concerning the project before travelling to Bangkok. This was not enough time to review even the most important project documentation. The negative consequence of this was that by the time the evaluators commenced their meetings with individuals who could provide useful comments on the project's implementation in Thailand, soon after their arrival in Bangkok, they were still

inadequately informed about the specific roles of some of those they met and the specific experience they could share. Too little time had been allowed in the evaluators' schedules for essential interviews/briefings with TICW staff which necessitated some last minute attempts to find time in the already heavy schedule.

The evaluators spent three weeks in South East Asia. They spent the first week in Thailand, interviewing the TICW sub-regional team and visiting project sites in Thailand together. During most of the second week the lead evaluator visited Viet Nam, while evaluation team member visited Lao PDR. In the third week the lead evaluator visited Yunnan and the team member visited Cambodia. As the evaluators had only one day together following these visits to confer, put further questions to the CTA and TICW sub-regional team and pass on some preliminary observations to the CTA and sub-regional team, the evaluator who was remaining in Bangkok for a few days had further meetings at the beginning of the following week.

1.3.1 Peer Group

While they were in Bangkok a "Peer Group" was convened to give information to the evaluators, consisting of representatives from DfID and one other donor government, from several inter-governmental organizations and from two international NGOs (see full list in Appendix 3). Although the Peer Group was initially intended to meet the evaluators at both the beginning and the end of their visit (see paragraph 32 of the Terms of Reference in Appendix 6), the evaluators felt a more appropriate methodology was to have individual interviews (meetings or phone interviews) with each of the members of the Peer Group prior to the meeting with all of them to discuss wider issues. The evaluators felt it premature to meet the Peer Group at the end before having had a chance to formalise their conclusions.

The levels of familiarity with the TICW project varied greatly among the members of the Peer Group. On the whole, as a result of this, the meeting with the Peer Group was not a useful opportunity to learn how the efforts of the project dovetailed with those of the organizations that the Peer Group members belonged to or how they felt the project could play a more useful role. The meeting highlighted, however, the lack of routine communication between donor governments and both inter-governmental and non-governmental initiatives against human trafficking. As a consequence it may have been more useful as a learning exercise to the members of the Peer Group itself than to the evaluation team.

Undoubtedly it would be useful for a donor government or the UNIAP to facilitate an exchange of information between donors and IGOs and NGOs, both about who is doing what and about projects which are in the pipe-line. Quite separately, it would also have been useful for the evaluation team to have met a group of anti-trafficking experts from a range of agencies to get feed-back about the anti-trafficking project they were evaluating.

The references to 'peer review' which appear later in this report do not refer to the members of this Peer Group, but rather to a technique which the evaluators recommend IPEC should consider using: consulting individuals who are known to have expertise on particular techniques in order to get their feed-back on some specific methods, rather than the entire TICW project.

1.3.2 Documentation consulted

The evaluators received a massive amount of documentation to review and were grateful to the TICW staff who had prepared this for them. They interviewed TICW staff in all five countries, along with project partners and some beneficiaries. They endeavoured to ensure that TICW staff were not present at the parts of interviews with partners when questions were asked about their relations with TICW staff and management. Whenever it was feasible, interviews with beneficiaries were conducted without representatives of the project partners who were providing direct assistance to them being present. However, this not always possible, particularly where preparations for meetings had been made before the evaluators' arrival on the assumption that beneficiaries would be willing and able to divulge useful information when questioned in the presence of both project partner staff and government officials. It should be noted that it is a general research observation that when questioned in the presence of people who they believe can determine whether they get access to further resources or not, people throughout the world refrain from voicing all their views and are inclined instead to say what they think others want them to say. In contrast, in the more intimate atmosphere of a conversation rather than public session, it is often possible for evaluators to obtain feedback which reflects the respondent's experience more directly.³ Such information is precisely the input from beneficiaries which all projects require in order to assess their real impact and to recalibrate their objectives and activities accordingly.

1.3.3 General caveats concerning the evaluation

It is necessary to register four caveats with regards to the overall conclusions presented in this evaluation:

- The evaluators were generally taken to see 'model' interventions in each country programme. While this is understandable and the evaluators were in no position to make a better selection, it must be noted that this sample cannot be said to be truly representative.⁴
- The evaluators were inevitably only able to see a proportion of the programme in each country and in some cases missed major components of the programme, which may affect overall impressions of the programme. For example in Cambodia, work in sending areas funded by other donors may be affecting the overall perception respondents may have of TICW's work.
- In several countries the evaluators were unable to meet representatives of one of TICW's major partners (Save the Children UK) and did not have enough time to meet a representative cross section of other agencies involved in anti-trafficking activities. They consequently heard less feed-back from these than they wanted and observed, with the benefit of hindsight, that this meant they had not obtained enough information from other organizations on whether they thought the TICW project could be pursuing its objectives in different ways that would be more effective, or working more closely with other organizations in pursuit of their common objectives..

³ See Chris Roche, *Impact Assessment for Development Agencies, Learning to Value Change*. Oxfam GB with Novib, Oxfam Publishing, Oxford, 1999, page 112 ('Reflections on individual interviews').

⁴ Evidently the evaluators *could* have asked to visit other project sites or suggested different methods. In the case of Thailand, they did review one Action Programme (concerning child begging) which project staff were not expecting to present them with details about.

- Even when the evaluators did receive clear information that progress was being made in preventing trafficking, it was generally difficult to attribute success clearly to TICW when other organizations or, in some cases, other IPEC projects were involved in closely related initiatives. The difficulty of attributing successes to a particular initiative when both general economic conditions and other projects are bringing about changes is, of course, not in the slightest way unique to this project.

2 Project design

2.1 The project's context

Phase 2 of the TICW project was designed towards the end of Phase 1 (which ran from February 2000 to April 2003) and started immediately afterwards, before the conclusions and recommendations of the final evaluation of Phase 1 were available. The premise behind Phase 1, which was maintained for Phase 2, was that there was a need to focus on cases of trafficking which did not result in commercial sexual exploitation, as these were already receiving a relatively high level of attention from other organizations in South East Asia. Initially, at least, Phase 1 made the assumption that the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) saw a great deal of human trafficking between the five countries involved, but by the end of Phase 1 patterns of migration and trafficking were better understood and there was recognition that many trafficking cases did not involve crossing a border. In the case of China's Yunnan Province, there was a recognition that people were being trafficked within Yunnan Province and also to other provinces within the People's Republic of China..

Whereas Phase 1 of the project had focused its activities on the rural areas which migrants and trafficking victims leave, Phase 2 proposed to extend preventive activities to the areas to which they migrate (mainly, but not exclusively, urban areas). It also set out to involve the ILO's traditional social partners (employers' and workers' organizations) in the project, whereas they had not been given a substantial role during Phase 1.

Although there was initially a high level of continuity between the two phases, both in terms of their objectives and personnel, important shifts occurred in both during 2003-2004. These involved the appointment of a new CTA and other staff changes which always affects the continuity of a project. One of the changes contributed to ensuring continuity and coherence between the TICW project and the new CP-TING project that focused on five other provinces in China: the deputy CTA for the TICW project was initially involved in designing the new project and then moved to Beijing to be its CTA.

In the course of 2004 there were important changes to the design of the project (see 2.2 below).

While Phase 2 of TICW continues to focus on prevention, in the light of the various changes inside and outside the project in 2004, its focus is now as follows:

- In Cambodia Phase 2 gives attention both to internal trafficking within the country and to Cambodians migrating to work in Thailand.
- In China's Yunnan Province the focus is almost exclusively on internal trafficking within China, both on trafficking within Yunnan (i.e. from rural areas to urban areas, with members of minorities featuring significantly among those trafficked) and between Yunnan and other parts of China.
- In Lao PDR the focus is almost exclusively on emigration to Thailand.
- In Thailand Phase 2 has set out to address several quite distinct patterns of trafficking and exploitation. The focus on parts of northern Thailand from which members of both minorities and the Thai majority community have been trafficked (both within Thailand and abroad, outside the GMS) has been maintained and extended to three provinces

(Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai and Phayao). The focus on areas to which migrants are trafficked or where they are exploited has been of various parts of Central Thailand, where the vast majority of foreign migrants come from Myanmar, with smaller numbers from Cambodia and Lao PDR. Although Myanmar is not part of the TICW project and the project consequently has no activities in Myanmar, the project has initiated activities on behalf of migrants from Myanmar in Thailand, by far the largest group of migrants in Thailand and one which receives no protection from their own government.

- In Viet Nam, Phase 2 set out to address internal trafficking. By 2004, UNICEF was taking the lead among intergovernmental agencies in responding to the pattern of trafficking of Vietnamese women and girls to southeast China for forced marriage and commercial sexual exploitation, which appeared qualitatively different to trafficking cases involving the exploitation of labour.

2.2 Developments since 2003 affecting the project and which have led to changes in the project

2.2.1 The development of COMMIT in 2004 and 2005

Discussions to develop COMMIT (the Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking) started in 2004 and involved six countries: the five TICW countries and also Myanmar. The process was facilitated by the UNIAP (the United Nations Inter-Agency Project On Human Trafficking in the Greater Mekong Sub-Region, covering Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam), which has effectively become the COMMIT Secretariat. In October 2004 the six States adopted a Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation against Trafficking in Persons in the GMS. In March 2005 they adopted a Sub-regional Plan of Action covering three years (2005 to 2007), listing 18 activities to be undertaken in seven broad areas.

While the development of a formal framework for cooperation between six governments was very positive, the formal role given to Myanmar in this process posed a challenge and certain restrictions for ILO for instance in attending meetings in Myanmar or at which the Government of Myanmar is formally represented on, as a result of the ILO resolution of the 87th Session (June 1999) of the International Labour Conference on the widespread use of forced labour in Myanmar, according to which Myanmar should cease to benefit from any technical cooperation or assistance from the ILO until such time as it has implemented the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry.

Prior to the adoption of the Memorandum of Understanding, the TICW project was able to press for clear specific references in the Memorandum to on ILO Conventions 29, 182, 138, references to trafficking and migration, articles on prevention and provision for consultations and greater participation of those affected. While the Plan of Action was being prepared, the TICW project reportedly influenced the provisions of the Plan concerning recruitment companies, tourism and multilateral cooperation.

The development of COMMIT was consequently both a challenge and an opportunity for the TICW project—one which was not anticipated when the project was designed. It created opportunities for more effective action to prevent human trafficking between States and enabled the ILO in 2005 to relaunch a tripartite conference of the TICW countries alongside COMMIT meetings (but without establishing a formal link), the SURAC (Sub-Regional Advisory Committee). The TICW project also took advantage of the COMMIT conference

at which a Memorandum of Understanding was to be signed in October 2004 to organize a meeting of children (the 'Mekong Children's Forum on Human Trafficking') shortly before hand, in order to try and influence the conference and its decisions. However, the fact that ILO representatives took a lower profile at COMMIT meetings than other IGOs, on account of Myanmar's participation (which per ILO resolution of the 87th Session (June 1999) of the International Labour Conference on the widespread use of forced labour in Myanmar, should cease to benefit from any technical cooperation or assistance from the ILO until such time as it has implemented the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry) meant that the ILO almost certainly had less influence than it would otherwise have done.

The development of COMMIT was an important sign that six nations were ready to work together and to hold each other accountable for their action or inaction to stop trafficking. It also meant that the UNIAP gave priority to its role as COMMIT secretariat, rather than providing overall coordination to the anti-trafficking activities in South East Asia of the IGOs and NGOs which had joined it, as it had when it was first established.

2.2.2 A new ILO-IPEC project to prevent human trafficking in five other provinces of China

During the first year of Phase 2 a new project in China, CP-TING, was designed, which DfID also agreed to finance (via its office in China). This involved two coastal provinces which receive large numbers of migrants from other provinces within China and three 'sending' provinces. The project started in April 2004. While Yunnan has continued to be part of the TICW project, its activities have required close coordination with the CP-TING manager in Beijing (himself a former member of the staff of TICW) and with others in the five provinces. The CP-TING project has benefited greatly from the experience of the TICW project in Yunnan and continues to make some demands on the time of TICW staff based in Yunnan. Although the TICW staff in Yunnan remain accountable to the project's management in Bangkok and the CP-TING management in Beijing has no formal role in the management of the TICW project in Yunnan, in effect the start of the CP-TING project meant that the Yunnan-based TICW staff also had to pay attention (and give time) to developments elsewhere in China. This contribution by the TICW project in Yunnan appeared both important and influential to the evaluation team.

2.2.3 Effects of Phase 1 of the project which have been taken into account while implementing Phase 2

Phase 2 of TICW has also been affected in other important ways by the activities of Phase 1 (February 2000-May 2003). Most of the effects have been positive, particularly the experience accrued from the Phase 1 direct assistance programmes which created revolving credit funds that have remained in existence and continued to bring benefits in several areas.

Phase 2 of TICW had to take into account that relations with some other agencies had been poor during Phase 1 and needed improving. At the sub-regional level, relations between TICW and the UNIAP had not been good. However, changes in late 2003 and early 2004 in the management of both projects and also in their objectives meant that relations improved rapidly. In at least one of the TICW project countries, in Thailand, relations with potential partner organizations and a prominent individual responsible for anti-trafficking work had reportedly been poor during Phase 1. Once again, since 2004 the TICW project has invested time and effort in building good working relationships with partners in Thailand, but the

previous history seems to have been a reason why activities in Central Thailand were slow to get going in Phase 2.

2.3 Recommendations from evaluations of Phase 1 of the project (mid-term review and final evaluation)

2.3.1 Recommendations from the MTE of Phase 1 (February 2002)

The Project Document for Phase 2 cites the following recommendations from the Mid-term Evaluation of Phase 1⁵ and mentions explicitly that they were included in the Phase 2 plans:⁶

- Monitor the impact of Action Programmes, synthesise data on changes in migration and vulnerability, disseminate lessons relating to community-level initiatives
- Work to the strengths of ILO-IPEC's mandate and structure, including stimulating research and strategy development on the demand side
- Work with IPEC national programmes and other UN agencies to strengthen political commitment to addressing trafficking.

The Project Document also mentions a series of notes and suggestions made in the Phase 1 Mid-term evaluation and suggested how they should be addressed. These are reproduced in Appendix 4. Although it is clear that attempts have been made to address the eight points, many of the comments were still pertinent at the time of the Phase 2 Mid-term evaluation.

2.3.2 Recommendations from the Final Evaluation of Phase 1 (June 2003)

The Final Evaluation contains 12 main recommendations.⁷ There are reproduced in Appendix 5 without the full commentaries attached to them. These recommendations were not made until after Phase 2 of the TICW project had got underway, so were not addressed in the Phase 2 Project Document. At a key meeting of project staff to launch Phase 2, held in October 2003, efforts were made to address these recommendations and to incorporate them in the 'Guiding Principles for staff of TICW-Project (Phase II)' which were revised at the staff meeting. Even so, at the time of the MTE in 2006 it was evident that the 12 recommendations should be revisited, for the concerns (in 2003) on which they were based had not gone away by 2006. On a vital issue such as 'participation',⁸ this suggested to the evaluators that the course of action chosen in 2003, while being a good attempt to respond to

⁵ These were the three recommendations made in a 'Summary of recommendations for the future phase (5 years)', which were directed at the TICW project itself. Three other recommendations were directed at IPEC's headquarters and four at DfID. See: Project Mid-Term Evaluation Report for The ILO-IPEC Greater Mekong Sub-Regional Project to Combat Trafficking in Children and Women (Phase One: February 2000-January 2003), Final Version: February 2002, page 7.

⁶ Project document, Reducing labour exploitation of children and women: Combating trafficking in the Greater Mekong Subregion Phase II, page 15.

⁷ The ILO-IPEC Greater Mekong Sub-Regional Project to Combat Trafficking in Children and Women, Final Lessons Learned, From Phase One, June 2003, pages 56 to 61.

⁸ On which the Final report commented that, "...the project could give more attention to ensuring that participatory approaches, to underpin methods and tools, are understood and encouraged throughout all project interventions, and right through the development process" and "From the beginning of Phase Two, the project could ensure that the processes of Participatory Monitoring and Evaluations (PME) are embedded in all project interventions from their inception. More attention is needed to ensure that participatory approaches and methods, as well as tools, encourage optimal inclusivity especially of children and young people".

the issue, had not been sufficient. This is not surprising, for ensuring full participation of both government stakeholders and beneficiaries (particularly those identified as being at disproportionate high risk of being trafficked) is very difficult. This issue is mentioned in more detail in Chapter 8 below.

2.4 Project redesign in late 2004 – revising the Immediate Objectives

Once a new CTA was appointed in late 2003, she revised the project document and objectives, along with TICW's progress, and decided it was necessary to clarify the objectives of Phase 2 by separating Immediate Objective 2 into two separate parts.

The initial IO-2 states:

By the end of the project, the knowledge base relating to trafficking and labour migration in the GMS will have been supplemented with new and updated information and a sub-regional platform for sharing information will be developed and functioning.

During 2004 it was evident that the UNIAP was developing a new institutional framework (the COMMIT) to facilitate exchange of information. The project's goal was consequently modified to remove a reference to "a sub-regional platform for sharing information" and move the focus from action at sub-regional and national levels to national and provincial levels.

In the place of the original IO-2 with its emphasis on a "sub-regional platform", the revised objectives put the emphasis on two separate issues: increasing the *knowledge base* and on *mobilizing* TICW's intended beneficiaries and making them better informed about trafficking in women and children. The other two immediate objectives were also amended to make them clearer.

TICW's revised objectives consequently now read as follows:

<p>DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE (Goal)</p> <p>To contribute to the elimination of trafficking in children and women (TICW) for labour and sexual exploitation in the Mekong Region through the development, implementation and monitoring of effective and integrated national and provincial strategies and actions</p> <p><i>(Was: "To contribute to the elimination of labour exploitation of children and women, and in particular the trafficking of children and women in the Greater Mekong Subregion, through the development, implementation and monitoring of effective and integrated sub-regional and national strategies and actions)</i></p>	
<p>PURPOSE (Immediate objectives - IOs)</p> <p>Four Immediate objectives (instead of three in original design – the original IO 2 was divided into two parts)</p>	
<p>IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE (PURPOSE) 1</p> <p>[i.e. Capacity building]</p>	<p>1. By the end of the project, multi-national/ bilateral, national and/or local frameworks, structures, policies, processes & capacity to address TICW within a broader migration framework will have been developed and strengthened.</p> <p><i>(Was: By the end of the project, national frameworks, structures, policies, processes and capacity to address trafficking will have been developed and/or strengthened.)</i></p>
<p>IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE (PURPOSE) 2</p> <p>[i.e. Knowledge base about trafficking and labour migration – but concept of a 'sub-regional platform' removed]</p>	<p>2. By the end of the project, the knowledge base relating to trafficking and labour migration will have been supplemented with new and updated information.</p> <p><i>(Was: By the end of the project, the knowledge base relating to trafficking and labour migration in the GMS will have been supplemented with new and updated information and a sub-regional platform for sharing information will be developed and functioning)</i></p>
<p>IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE (PURPOSE) 3</p> <p>[i.e. Advocacy, awareness raising and mobilization] Introduced in 2005</p>	<p>3. By the end of the project, the general public, key project stakeholders and the project's target groups (children and young women) in the five countries will have been better informed and mobilized to prevent trafficking in women and children.</p>
<p>IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE (PURPOSE) 4</p> <p>[i.e. Direct assistance]</p>	<p>4. By the end of the project, good practices for prevention at sending communities and destination areas developed by the project will have been recognized, replicated & mainstreamed in government policy & programs.</p> <p><i>(Was: The end of the project, government efforts to mainstream good practices in community-based prevention identified in Phase I of the project will have been supported and supplemented with lessons learned from Phase II)</i></p>

At the level of outputs, indicators (objectively verifiable indicators – OVI) and activities, the project document was also revised at the same time. The revisions were reportedly made to simplify the language for clarity, better understanding and easier translation. While there was no change in strategic direction, it was undoubtedly sensible to revise all these in the light of what was known by 2004 about the likely activities of others.

2.4.1 Design issues which remain after the 2004 revision of the Immediate Objectives – concerning ‘influencing’ people and awareness raising

Even with its immediate objectives revised, the project remains ambitious, aims to achieve a great deal over a wide geographical area and is consequently rather unwieldy to administer. At the same time, it is clear that it has already made much progress in achieving the four immediate objectives.

The evaluators observed some confusion among TICW staff as to what Objective 4 signifies. There were references to ‘direct assistance’ and also to ‘demonstration models’, and some appeared to see demonstration projects as covering all four objectives. The evaluators also noted some confusion among external observers who understood that the provision of direct assistance referred to microfinance and nothing else.

Objective 3 concerning ‘advocacy, awareness raising and mobilization’ may deserve reformulating further. In practice most awareness raising activities have been organized as forms of direct assistance, meaning that there is overlap between Objectives 3 and 4 and some confusion for TICW staff about how and whether awareness raising activities relate to Objective 3 or Objective 4. This is understandable, in that providing people who are at risk of being trafficked with information about the risks and advice on how to avoid (or minimize) them is evidently an important activity that must be carried out at community level. The specific emphasis on information and mobilization in Objective 3 (rather than ‘advocacy’ more generally, or ‘influencing’ key individuals or institutions) has resulted in an inappropriately narrow focus on communicating information to project stakeholders and target groups. It seems also to have led to an assumption by TICW staff based in Bangkok that the project’s Communications Officer is responsible for the narrow field of public information, rather than the wider one of advocacy and enabling the project to influence people. It would probably help project staff to define once again who is responsible in each country for developing an advocacy strategy and for defining targets to be ‘influenced’ both directly by TICW staff and by its partners.

In principle Objective 3 should cover a range of initiatives to ‘influence’ people or change their views or their behaviour. Advocacy techniques should therefore be used explicitly to overcome obstacles (such as those which have slowed the project’s implementation, for example, in Thailand and Viet Nam) and are also vital to enable the project to disseminate its recommendations about ‘good practice’, within the GMS countries, elsewhere within the IPEC and ILO and also beyond. This will be especially important over the remaining period of the project, for, in order to enhance the project’s impact and effectiveness, it should plan how to distribute any future publications carefully and avoid publishing them at the very end of the project cycle, when effective dissemination cannot be assured or evaluated.

2.4.2 Appropriateness of the project’s indicators

The revision of the project’s objectives, outputs and activities referred to in 2.4 above means that the project’s objectively verifiable indicators (OVIs) were revised relatively recently, in 2004. It is consequently less likely that they need modifying further than if they had been adopted three years ago, when the project was designed.

The revised Phase 2 project monitoring plan lists 14 distinct indicators and targets to be reached by the end of the project in 2008.

The revised indicators appear valid as ways of measuring progress towards achieving the project's four immediate goals. However, their disadvantage is that they do not reveal whether progress is also being made towards achieving the project's development objective.⁹ This is not a fault of the project, but a characteristic which it shares with most other projects designed to reduce rates of human trafficking. This level of indicators (for immediate goals, rather than for a larger development goal) is considered appropriate by IPEC for all its projects. However, in the case of initiatives to stop trafficking, it means that, if the project logic is faulty, substantial activities in pursuit of immediate goals may be carried out according to plan, which are expected to contribute to achieving the development goal, but are not in fact doing so. The lack of measurement of the impact of the project on levels of labour exploitation of children and women occurring in the GMS (and its contribution to eliminating this labour exploitation) was consequently a cause for worry to the evaluation team and had apparently already led DfID's representative to ask why information on this was not being provided. However, it is not only a possible fault in the project's design but also because providing such information is immensely difficult.¹⁰

The evaluation team feels that the TICW project, together with other projects and programmes operating in the GMS sub-region which share the objective of stopping human trafficking (or reducing the number of people being trafficked), ought to be developing ways of measuring whether the numbers being trafficked are reducing or the abuse inflicted on migrants is decreasing, and that donors should be encouraging them to do so. They also recognized that it would be unrealistic to expect the TICW project to do this without the cooperation of other organizations, such as the UNIAP, and that it would be unrealistic to propose that, half way through Phase 2, the TICW project should embark on collecting this information by itself. .

In the specific case of the TICW project, the evaluation team concluded that some tracking of samples of beneficiaries would be useful beyond the expected life of the TICW project (i.e. 2008) in order to assess the impact of the project's preventive activities over the longer term. While this might be complicated to organize once the project's funding comes to an end, it would be invaluable in enabling IPEC and others to draw firmer conclusions about what prevention activities work and which do not.

The indicators and targets set in the Project Monitoring Plan for Objective 1 (capacity building) are, for the most part, directly linked to the project's objectives. For example, the number of provinces or areas to be influenced was agreed early on in the project, so targets such as "1 Provincial and 3 city/prefecture plans on trafficking developed" in Yunnan make obvious sense.

⁹ Currently, the ILO's project design approach does not require the identification of project specific indicators for the development objective or broader level impact as part the design for each project. Indicators for this level of impact are seen as part of further impact assessment since it needs to consider time lags, interventions by others and external factors to assess the nature of impact and attribution. Indicators for broad changes in magnitude and incidence of child labour measured through various national and local surveys are also seen by IPEC to provide indicators at the level of development objectives.

¹⁰ UNESCO runs a project in Bangkok which has demonstrated the unreliability of most published statistics about the numbers of people being trafficked (see <http://www.unescobkk.org/culture/trafficking>). Most statistics available (at the moment) about the numbers of children or adults being trafficked, both in South East Asia and elsewhere) are inherently inaccurate. As more and more projects have started, more evidence about trafficking cases has become available, so claims have been made around the world that the numbers of trafficking cases are increasing, although there is often no real evidence of this.

In contrast, some of the target numbers mentioned under Objectives 3 and 4 appear more arbitrary and seem to have been set in 2004 under the influence of the activities which the project was opting for. For example, Indicator 3.1 (“No. of individuals of (a) the general public and (b) at risk groups reached by project’s information activities”) mentions large and possible meaningless numbers of people which the project’s information is intended to have reached by 2008¹¹—meaningless, because measuring the number of people who have simply been exposed to a message, without taking into account the nature of their exposure to the message or the extent to which they absorbed it (which is the subject of Indicator 3.2), does not convey useful information about the project’s impact.

Indicator 3.2 (“Extent of attitudes changed positively among (a) the general public and (b) at risk groups to prevent TICW”) appears much more meaningful, with more modest targets,¹² but ones that are difficult to measure. The information contained in the annexes to the project’s six-monthly Technical Progress Reports (TPR) confirms that the indicators are difficult to measure.

For example, Annex 2 of the July-December 2005 TPR, reporting on ‘Measurement against project objectives’ (under the heading of ‘Performance information and assessment’), mentions the activities which have been undertaken in relation to indicators 3.1 and 3.2, but offers no information on objectively verifiable indicators. Only in the case of China was substantial information available about the number of individuals reached.¹³

The criticism here is not that the required data on OVIs has not been presented, but that the quantitative information required may be both difficult to acquire and fairly meaningless once obtained. When it comes to measuring the “Extent of attitudes changed positively”, even the data from Yunnan offers no information. In practice, a perfectly sensible comment under this indicator came from Lao PDR, where it was reported that “As a result of the VDF [Village Development Fund – providing micro-credit] project in the three original provinces, local authorities and members of the VDFs are more informed about the dangers of trafficking and pass on this knowledge to their peers”. Not surprisingly, project staff have difficulty in estimating how many people were “more informed” and how they disseminated this information further.

Other projects intending to prevent trafficking have found it very difficult to produce meaningful data about the effects of their information or awareness raising activities. While the indicators being used in the TICW project are sensible in that they try to keep a measure of both the number of people who have been exposed to information by the project and the number whose attitudes have been changed, it is fairly clear that the project has not yet found

¹¹ Cambodia: (a) 70,000 ++ (b) 7,000; China Yunnan: (a) 110,000 (b) 11,000; Lao PDR: (a) 80,000 ++ (b) 8,000; Thailand: (a) 3,300,000 ++ (b) 20,000; Viet Nam: (a) 2,500,000 ++ (b) 11,500.

¹² Cambodia: (a) 20,000 (b) 2,000; China Yunnan: (a) 36,000 (b) 3,600; Lao PDR: (a) 5,000 (b) 500; Thailand: (a) 65,000 (b) 6,500; Viet Nam: (a) 40,000 (b) 4,000.

¹³ Reporting under Indicator 3.1 as follows:

- In Menghai country approximately 42,000 persons watched the art shows. Of this number, 7,700 boys, 13,600 girls and 9,100 young women (18-25 years). Therefore the total at risk population reached was 30,400.

- In Jiangcheng county, 10,520 people in Jiangcheng took part in advocacy activities including training, short drama and stage shows. This included 1796 boys, 1754 girls and 3561 young women. Total at-risk population reached 7,111 persons.

- In Kunming city, approximately 10,000 people were present in an even at Taoyun Square publicizing combating trafficking and AIDS prevention.

- 60,000 handbooks on preventing trafficking and safe employment were disseminated.

the right ways of measuring its impact in this domain. Rather than trying to rethink how to do this by itself, it would be useful to consult with others (outside the project) to see whether more meaningful targets, indicators and means of verification can be developed. This would be useful not simply for the TICW project and its donor, but for a wide range of other anti-trafficking projects around the world.

In Yunnan the evaluator noted that an Action Programme had adequate ‘output indicators’ but that there were no adequate ‘results indicators’ to measure what changes have actually been brought about by the programme’s activities. This feature appears to be shared by many other programmes across the TICW project, meaning that there is inadequate evidence of whether the project is making progress towards its development goal (of contributing to the elimination of labour exploitation of children and women), even when there is evidence of progress towards achieving the project’s specific objectives. This issue is mentioned in Chapter 8 in section 8.2.3 about impact.

2.5 The relationship between the project and other child labour and child-trafficking interventions supported by IPEC or by other organizations working the Greater Mekong Sub-region

The TICW project is only one of many initiatives to address human trafficking in the GMS and has a variety of relationships with the others, some at sub-regional level and others at national or local level.

As far as the ILO and IPEC are concerned, the TICW project also overlaps and interacts with a series of other initiatives to address trafficking or child labour. The main ones are mentioned here. Even within the ILO, so many related projects and programmes were mentioned to the evaluation team that it was difficult for them to comprehend all the interdependencies. On the one hand, the multitude of initiatives showed that the TICW’s anti-trafficking work was well rooted in a wider set of initiatives to create decent work for migrants. On the other, the coherence and logic of the numerous initiatives was sometimes difficult to perceive.

2.5.1 UN Trust Fund for Human Security funded project “Prevention of Trafficking in Children and Women at a Community Level in Cambodia and Vietnam”

In May 2003 the Government of Japan announced it was donating US\$1,214,464.76 to the UN Trust Fund for Human Security for activities in Cambodia and Viet Nam “to build community capacity to prevent trafficking in children and women in a participatory manner” and that the ILO was to be the implementing agency.¹⁴ The Human Security Fund project has been implemented under the umbrella of the TICW project, allowing the project to pay more attention to direct assistance activities in sending areas of Viet Nam and Cambodia

In Cambodia, the Human Security Fund is financing prevention activities in sending areas – micro-finance, awareness-raising etc - which are reported to be similar to the prevention activities funded by DfID. The evaluation team did not visit these projects.

¹⁴ ‘Assistance for Prevention of Trafficking in Cambodia and Viet Nam’, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Japan) news release, 8 May 2003, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/announce/2003/5/0508.html>

In Viet Nam activities did not start until 2005, once DSEP had agreed to Phase 2 of the TICW project, and were due to run for 12 months. They focused on three provinces in the south of the country, all areas from which women or girls were reported to have been trafficked abroad.

In principle the activities financed by the UN Trust Fund for Human Security directly complement those of the TICW project. In practice, they have allowed for more direct assistance activities than DfID's funding would have allowed. On the positive side, this has allowed the lessons already learned in sending areas to be used to support more direct assistance activities there (and, presumably, to learn more lessons about what works and what does not). However, the evaluation team was also concerned that this may have encouraged TICW staff to continue focusing their attention on organizing direct assistance, rather than reorienting to concentrate on mainstreaming these in government policy. In practice, the evaluation team was convinced that some prolongation of direct assistance activities was justified, in order to draw more conclusions about what practices deserved mainstreaming.

2.5.2 Project to Prevent Trafficking in Girls and Young Women for Labour exploitation within China (CP-TING project)

The new project to prevent human trafficking in five other provinces of China started in April 2004 and has been mentioned already in section 2.2.2.

2.5.3 Combating Child Trafficking for Labour and Sexual Exploitation (TICSA)

While the TICW project has focused on the prevention of trafficking in women and children in five GMS countries, the TICSA project has responded to trafficking in women and children by developing good practice to withdraw victims of trafficking from exploitation and to enable them to recover and restart their lives. Initially its focus was on countries in South Asia, but in its Phase 2, TICSA extended its activities to parts of South East Asia, including Thailand. For example, TICSA supported a Thai NGO, the Centre for the Protection of Children's Rights Foundation (CPCR), to develop a manual on a multidisciplinary approach towards enabling children who have been trafficked to recover (published in 2006: *Rehabilitation of the Victims of Child Trafficking: A Multidisciplinary Approach*).

While there were evidently good reasons for giving TICSA and TICW these different approaches, the result was, in the view of the evaluation team, to reduce the feed-back from children and women who had been trafficked (the focus of TICSA's activities) to TICW, to provide TICW with the basic data about who was being trafficked, which it needed in order to target prevention activities at those known to be most vulnerable to being trafficked. The evaluators were told that the separate orientation of the two projects had not prevented a good exchange of information between them (and it was evident that staff at the headquarters of both projects shared the same offices in Bangkok and were in regular contact). Nevertheless, one of the features of some TICW initiatives is that they have not taken the specific data available from and about trafficking victims into account enough and this may well be because the project was not routinely processing information collected about the profile of individuals who have recently been trafficked.

2.5.4 The Time-Bound Programme (TBP) to eliminate the worst forms of child labour in Cambodia

In September 2005 IPEC and the Government of Cambodia launched a comprehensive programme to eliminate all the worst forms of child labour in Cambodia (including the various forms of exploitation for which children have been trafficked in Cambodia). TICW's interactions with the IPEC support project to the Cambodian time-bound programme are mentioned in section 4.4.

2.5.5 Other related ILO and IPEC country programmes

In addition to IPEC's support to the national time-bound programme in Cambodia, ILO is engaged in other initiatives to end the use of child labour and/or prevent trafficking in three of the four other countries: ILO WEDGE/ISED programme in Lao PDR; an IPEC programme in Viet Nam; and preparation for a national programme to eliminate the worst forms of child labour in Thailand, following Thailand's ratification of Convention No. 182.

In the case of Thailand, some of IPEC's other work directly concerns child migrants and complements the focus of the TICW project. The IPEC Child Domestic Workers (CDW) project has provided technical support to the Foundation for Child Development (FCD) for advocacy work on child domestic workers and a network of research organizations have agreed to develop Minimum Standards of Treatment for Migrant Domestic Workers, work which is intended to be supported by the TICW project. While not related directly to trafficking, all these activities appear to contribute (to different degrees) to the common goal of preventing human trafficking.

2.5.6 Other ILO programmes combating human trafficking

The ILO's Special Action Programme against Forced Labour (SAPFL) is also involved in running projects to stop human trafficking. During 2005 restructuring within the International Labour Office in Geneva brought both IPEC and SAPFL into the same department for the same time and discussions were launched to rationalize the ILO's work on the issue of trafficking. In the long-term this may ensure better sharing of expertise between the different ILO teams involved in combating trafficking, but, as far as the evaluators could establish, it has not yet yielded benefits to the TICW project. Indeed, a possible disadvantage from the project during 2005 was that Geneva-based staff, including those in IPEC with expert knowledge of anti-trafficking projects throughout the world, had to dedicate much of their time to in-house discussions on restructuring and reorganizing the ILO's work on human trafficking.

2.5.7 Initiatives by other organizations

The evaluation team was aware of numerous other activities being organized in relation to human trafficking in the South East Asia sub-region and did not have an opportunity to meet representatives of all the organizations concerned. As many focused primarily (or exclusively) on trafficking in adult women for commercial sexual exploitation and often on prosecution or release and recovery rather than prevention, the evaluators did not feel they needed to consult these organizations directly. However, information received after the evaluation visits revealed that there was sometimes more overlap than either the evaluators or

TICW staff were aware of,¹⁵ underlining the need for better mechanisms for exchanging information about who is doing what than appeared to be in place in March 2006 at sub-regional level or at national level in several of the countries involved in the TICW project.

¹⁵ See comments in 4.3 below.

3 The Relevance of the Project's Objectives, Themes and Strategy

3.1 The relevance of the project's focus on women and children

3.1.1 Focusing on young adults as well as children

Among IPEC projects focusing on trafficking, the TICW project is apparently unusual because it deals with young adult women aged 18 to 25, as well as children (both boys and girls under 18). The evaluators were told that IPEC staff in Geneva had expressed concern informally that the project focused on adults who might be exploited, apparently on the grounds that IPEC itself is not experienced at dealing with the issue of human trafficking when it involved adults, even though other parts of the ILO are. Nevertheless, it is clear from a range of stakeholders that it is appropriate for this project to try to prevent anyone being trafficked rather than focusing more narrowly on those who are aged under 18.

In China, for example, the principle group of young people considered by the project to be at risk of being trafficked is adolescent girls. As far as this group is concerned, although the threshold of 17/18, between childhood and adulthood, has some legal significance as far as their rights are concerned, it does not significantly change either their vulnerability (to being trafficked) or their ability to avoid being trafficked.

While there is little doubt that the project should focus on young adult women as well as both boys and girls below the age of 18, it is questionable whether the project should nominally exclude young men from its scope. For example, in Thailand male migrants from Myanmar are reported to end up in situations of forced labour, as well as women. In an area of high emigration in northern Thailand (Phayao Province), one local official dealing with labour issues questioned why the project was not also concerned about male migrant workers from the province who were subjected to abuse after going to work in the Middle East. In Lao PDR, young men are reported to be trafficked to work in fishing, rubber plantations and sugar cane production. There are concerns over the trafficking of men in Cambodia also. Although the disproportionate number of women and girls trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation provides some justification for paying more attention to young women than young men, the ILO's own publications shows that young men also feature among the victims of trafficking.¹⁶ The TICW project's focus on the forms of exploitation associated with trafficking other than the exploitation of the prostitution of others (i.e. forced labour, slavery or servitude) means that adults of both sexes ought in principle to feature among its beneficiaries, rather than only women. In practice, some forms of direct assistance provided by the TICW project in the areas from which people migrate may have benefited young men as well as young women, while close cooperation with a partner in China (Yunnan), which focuses exclusively on women and girls, has understandably meant that direct assistance in urban areas is intended to benefit women and girls almost exclusively.

¹⁶ ILO. A global alliance against forced labour. Global Report under the Follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, 2005, page 15. This estimates that the number of people subjected to forced labour at a given time as a result of trafficking is 2.45 million, of whom 43 per cent have been trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation (i.e. 1.05 million) and 32 per cent for economic exploitation (i.e. 784,000). While the Global Report indicates that only 2 per cent of those subjected to forced labour involving sexual exploitation are men and boys, they account for a much larger proportion—44 per cent—of those subjected to forced labour involving economic exploitation.

3.1.2 The gender aspect – the relevance of promoting gender equality

Despite reports that some young men are trafficked, the project's focus on promoting gender equality is still very relevant for all the countries covered by the project. It has been expressed in particular in the numerous direct assistance initiatives which involve efforts to promote girls' education, self confidence and self esteem and was enhanced in the case of China by adding an element to the original project to provide support to allow adolescent girls from minority groups to attend lower secondary schools. The emphasis given to promoting gender equality has varied from country to country. It is strong in Yunnan, where it appears to be an essential element of the project's success.

3.2 The relevance of focusing on labour exploitation rather than sexual exploitation

The internationally recognized definition of trafficking in persons was amended in 2000¹⁷ to include various forms of economic exploitation (generally referred to by the ILO as 'labour exploitation'), such as forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery and servitude, in addition to the conventional focus on the exploitation of the prostitution of others and other forms of sexual exploitation. However, with the exception of the ILO, most agencies engaged in anti-trafficking initiatives have continued to put all or most of their emphasis on efforts to combat commercial sexual exploitation.

Evidence collected during Phase 1 of the TICW project confirmed that more people are trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation in GMS countries than for other forms of exploitation, but also that insufficient attention was being paid by other international organizations to cases of trafficking for economic exploitation and that national institutions established to combat trafficking were focusing almost exclusively on trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation. Since 2000 the TICW project has succeeded in redressing the balance somewhat and also collected further evidence to show that children and both young women and young men have been trafficked into various forms of exploitation other than sexual exploitation.

Nevertheless, the term 'trafficking' contains ambiguities. People who migrate to earn a living away from home are routinely subjected to a wide range of violations of their human rights and their labour rights. The forms of economic exploitation associated with trafficking (forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery and servitude) feature among these abuses, but in many situations it is appropriate (and feasible) to take action to prevent a wider set of abuses than just these. Furthermore, as young people who emigrate from their place of origin do not intend to be trafficked and do not know what forms of exploitation they might be subjected to, preventive action has to be broad in order to reduce their vulnerability to any of the forms of exploitation associated with trafficking (i.e. sexual exploitation or labour exploitation). Fortunately the TICW project's design and management takes these points into account.

The use of the term 'labour exploitation' by the ILO to refer to all the forms of exploitation to which trafficking children and adults are subjected other than sexual exploitation (and the removal of organs) has some risks, for the term can easily be interpreted too narrowly to refer to formal workplaces, whereas in reality it covers trafficked children engaged in a wide

¹⁷ By the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, 2000.

variety of economic activities on the streets (such as begging), as well as a some working in private households child domestic workers) and a few in formal work places. In Yunnan, for example, it seemed that the coordinators of the project at city level were satisfied that no cases of child labour were occurring once labour inspectors confirmed that they had not found any in the workplaces they had inspected in the city. The evaluation team observed that project staff had engaged in numerous attempts to explain, both to partners and others, what forms of exploitation are associated with trafficking, but that the conventional foci of government and law enforcement agencies was still an obstacle to ensuring that all aspects of the informal and unregulated economy are covered.

3.3 Situating trafficking in women and children (TICW) within the broader migration framework and aiming to make migration safer

A logical corollary of promoting protection in the destination areas for migrants who might be trafficked (protection of labour rights for adult migrants, protection of labour rights for adolescent migrant workers and child protection more generally for all migrant children) is that efforts should be taken to make all phases of the migration process safer. The TICW project has set out to do this and is in the process of preparing a campaign with the theme of “Travel Smart—Work Smart” to help vulnerable migrants avoid human trafficking and both labour and sexual exploitation.¹⁸ This is similar to campaigns to give advice to internal migrants in countries such as Brazil in the past. Evidently such campaigns have to maintain a careful balance—between informing people about how to migrate safely and actively encouraging them to migrate or giving them false assurances.

The evaluators heard that the concept of making migration safer specifically for children has worried some staff working elsewhere in IPEC, in the light of international standards which prohibit the full-time employment of children below the age of 15 or 14 and which prohibit anyone under 18 being involved in any of the ‘worst forms of child labour’.¹⁹ Nevertheless, the ILO’s own data issued in 2002 showed that almost one third of the children who were economically active around the world were not involved in activities which the ILO labelled as ‘child labour’ and considered inappropriate.²⁰ The same data showed that more than half the children aged 15 to 17 who were economically active around the world were involved in activities which are acceptable by international standards.

In practice adolescents in the GMS are reported to begin leaving home to seek work elsewhere before they have even finished their basic or compulsory education and large numbers migrate within their own countries (in the case of Cambodia, China, Thailand and Viet Nam) or to another country (in the case of Cambodia and Lao PDR, as well as adolescents migrating from Myanmar to Thailand) before they reach the age of 18. This does

¹⁸ 14-page working concept paper for prevention related awareness-raising interventions in the Greater Mekong Sub-Region.

¹⁹ And the TICW project’s own publication about Cambodian migrants going to Thailand indicated that some 24 per cent of those leaving to seek work in Thailand were aged between 10 and 14 (Destination Thailand. A cross-border labour migration survey in Banteay Meanchey Province, Cambodia. 2005, page 61)

²⁰ See: ILO, A future without child labour, Global Report 2002, page 16. This indicates that out of a total of 352 children under 18 who were economically active, 245 million were engaged in activities which should be labelled as ‘child labour’ (so 107 million, or 30.4 per cent were engaged in acceptable economic activities). It also indicates that out of the 141 million aged 15 to 17 who were economically active, 59 million were engaged in activities which should be labelled as ‘child labour’, while 82 million, or 58 per cent, were engaged in acceptable economic activities.

not mean they are trafficked, but does signify that special efforts are needed to ensure that migrant adolescent workers are protected in the workplace and not subjected to abuse. It also means that it is appropriate to enable them to migrate safely. Other organizations have tended to shy away from initiatives which enable this age group to migrate safely, leaving them inadequately informed and unprotected. Initiatives by the TICW project to promote safe migration both for adults and older adolescents therefore seem relevant and urgently needed.

3.3.1 Avoiding moving the focus too far from ‘trafficking’ to ‘migration’

Making migration safer is nevertheless a much broader objective than that of preventing trafficking from taking place. While stopping trafficking requires organizations such as the ILO to take positive forms of action, rather than holding up a large ‘stop’ sign, there is also a risk that by investing intensively in positive initiatives (such as making migration safer or improving the quality of education available for adolescent girls), the project may lose its specific focus on trafficking. This risk would be minimized or avoided if the project’s positive initiatives were based on a sound analysis of who is most at risk of being trafficked and if its initiatives were targeted primarily at such individuals and their communities. An apparent weakness of the project is that it does not appear to have devoted enough attention to identifying in an objective way who is at disproportionately higher risk than others of being trafficked (or has not done so in an explicit way that was apparent to the evaluators). The process for selecting target areas for direct assistance, capacity building and other activities was evidently ‘participative’ in the sense that the project’s partners in Ministries of Labour and local government were involved in selecting target areas and target groups. However, the criteria adopted at stakeholder meetings early on in Phase 2, at both national and provincial level, led to entire villages and communities being selected as targets for prevention initiatives, rather than individual households or individuals known to have specific characteristics which made them vulnerable to being trafficked. This was understandable in that not enough data was available at the time of stakeholder meetings to know in detail what characteristics and experiences placed individuals at disproportionately high risk of being trafficked. The result, however, is that many prevention efforts look like a ‘blunt’ instrument, rather than a precision tool.²¹ The evaluators spent some time considering the pro’s and con’s of this broad approach and recognized that some techniques, such as the credit made available to local communities via VDFs in Lao PDR, needed to be kept broad, while requiring mechanisms to ensure that those at disproportionately high risk (of being trafficked) benefited as well as others in their communities.

This lack of attention to the specific causes of trafficking and the factors which makes certain communities and individuals vulnerable to being trafficked²² is, in the view of the evaluators, a serious flaw in the project. It has meant that the direct assistance activities designed to prevent people being trafficked have not been well enough targeted. It also means that the

²¹ A recent study of trafficked girls and women in northern Thailand is relevant in this respect. It concluded that in families with three daughters, the second daughters were at significantly greater risk of being recruited into the commercial sex sector than either eldest or youngest daughters. The study identified the social and cultural reasons for this. The author observed that, “Academics and policymakers must move beyond ‘poverty’ and ‘lack of education’ to recognize the subtleties of the challenges and frustrations confronting people living in the less developed parts of our rapidly developing world”. Lisa Rende Taylor, ‘Dangerous Trade-offs. The Behavioral Ecology of Child Labor and Prostitution in Rural Northern Thailand’, *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 46, No. 3, June 2005.

²² Even though the very first section, 1.1.1, of the Project document mentions the issue of vulnerability.

project has not so far produced technical tools which other projects can use to identify individuals and communities at risk, yet alone to know which preventive techniques are likely to be most effective in protecting them.

A very positive aspect of the TICW project has been its efforts to move the focus of anti-trafficking initiatives off a target group which is defined narrowly in terms of its being subjected to commercial sexual exploitation to a broader one defined in terms of the UN's Trafficking Protocol (2000) and involving those subjected to labour exploitation. This has the disadvantage of moving the target and making it difficult to measure progress. While some data has been produced within the GMS on the numbers of individuals trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation (and it might be feasible to use this data to measure the project's impact), virtually no meaningful quantitative data appears to be available about the scale of the forms of trafficking which are occurring as defined more widely by the UN Trafficking Protocol. It is consequently difficult or impossible to measure whether the TICW project is having its intended effect and contributing to the elimination of labour exploitation of children and women.

3.4 Taking a preventive approach

The project set out to prevent human trafficking—to stop it happening—rather than to provide assistance or protection to individuals who have already been trafficked. In determining its preventive approach, the project also set out to go beyond “just awareness raising” (while including awareness raising when deemed necessary) and to identify other techniques which might be effective in preventing trafficking. Both these approaches appear as vital today as when the project was designed. Indeed, since 2003 further evidence has become available concerning other regions of the world, which demonstrates the inadequacy of “awareness raising” as a technique to prevent trafficking.²³

Nevertheless, in the case of Viet Nam, representatives of DSEP told the evaluator that they would prefer the TICW project to provide support for efforts to protect and assist children and young women who have already been trafficked. In practice, it seems that adequate assistance is already available from other sources to support such efforts and that, to allocate resources intended for prevention to assistance initiatives would undermine the project's chances of preventing people from being trafficked. The need for resources to protect and assist trafficked victims is immediate and obvious in Viet Name, as in many parts of the world, but it seems to the evaluation team to be irrational to channel resources to them at the expense of prevention efforts and learning how to prevent people being trafficked in the first place.

3.5 The project's emphasis on the demand for trafficked labour (the destination side)

The emphasis on preventive measures in the areas to which migrants are trafficked, particularly prevention of labour exploitation, was introduced in Phase 2 of the project. It has led to new activities in destination areas in four of the five countries (i.e. with the exception of Lao PDR). In the case of Thailand, it has greatly increased the relevance of the

²³ See, for example, Ruth Rosenberg, Sebastian Lăzăroiu and Elena Tyuryukanova, Best Practices for Programming to Prevent Trafficking in Human Beings in Europe and Eurasia, Development Alternatives Inc for USAID, September 2004. <http://www.vitalvoices.org/files/docs/Prevention%20assessment%20Report-formatted%20CAS1.pdf>

project, which in Phase 1 concentrated on the source areas of Thais who were being trafficked (in northern Thailand) at a time when their numbers seem to have been diminishing, while increasing numbers of migrant workers from neighbouring countries were arriving in Thailand and many were either being trafficked or ending up in Thailand in the situations of forced labour associated with trafficking. As a result of the focus on prevention in destination areas, the TICW project is now addressing the abuse to which migrants from Myanmar are subjected in Thailand (and they are by far the single largest group of foreigners and migrant workers in Thailand, alongside smaller numbers from Cambodia and Lao PDR). This is definitely a positive development. Although practical work on prevention in destination areas in Cambodia has only been happening for several months, this probably represents the most advanced work in the project as a whole.

At international level, over the past five years there have been numerous recommendations that States should take action to discourage 'demand' for trafficked persons.²⁴ However, there has been a significant degree of confusion about what constitutes 'demand' and what action would be appropriate to discourage it. The TICW project has already made a significant contribution to dispelling this confusion at the conceptual level,²⁵ but not yet identified clearly a menu of activities to address demand, although the evaluation team understood that it intends to do so.

3.6 The project's focus on participatory approaches

The evaluators experienced some difficulty in establishing exactly what the terms 'participation' and 'participatory approaches' (and, to a lesser extent 'participatory monitoring') signified to TICW staff. They started on the assumption that those who were expected to participate were both the project's stakeholders and its intended beneficiaries.²⁶ However, they noted that in the Phase 2 Project Document the focus on the question of participation is on the project's stakeholders, not its intended beneficiaries (even though IPEC considers 'beneficiaries' to be part of a broader group of 'stakeholders'). The Project Document stresses "an approach that encourages stakeholder participation at all stages, from planning to implementation to evaluation and lessons development" (section 6.1).²⁷

²⁴ For example, article 9.5 of the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (2000) states that "States Parties shall adopt or strengthen legislative or other measures...to discourage the demand that fosters all forms of exploitation of persons, especially women and children, that leads to trafficking".

²⁵ With the publication of: Elaine Pearson, *Human Trafficking: Redefining Demand Destination factors in the trafficking of children and young women in the Mekong sub-region*, 2005.

²⁶ Concerning the 'principle of participation', see Garton Sandifolo Kamchedzera, *Human Rights Based Approach To Development Programming. Some Human Rights-Related Commonly Asked Questions and Suggested Answers*. 11 August 2000 (updated 2005 for UNICEF). The author says that one of the five principles which underpin human rights is the 'principle of participation'. He suggests, "Participation is imperative as both a process and an outcome if the principle of human dignity and subjectivity is to be respected and if human rights are to be enjoyed sustainably". On the issue of the participation of beneficiaries in decisions about activities affecting them, the evaluators were also informed by the ILO's own Convention No. 169 (Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention), 1989, particularly articles 7.1 and 27, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious or Linguistic Minorities (1993), the draft United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples (1994) prepared by the UN Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

²⁷ IPEC Geneva staff told the evaluators that DfID had introduced a focus on participatory approaches, as well as capacity building, with its funding and that this was one of the major influences which DfID had on IPEC's work in the late 1990s. Participatory approaches are said to now be part of IPEC standard practice, with

Broadly speaking, ‘participation’ and ‘participatory approaches’ appear to be interpreted in the project to require a consultative, inclusive approach with key stakeholders, essentially referring to actual and potential Action Programme partners (mainly government departments, but also including others such as social partners and NGOs). When it comes to encouraging the participation of beneficiaries of projects (individuals and communities), it seems that the project relies on Action Programme partners to ensure that participation occurs.

In principle this delegation of responsibility (for ensuring the participation of the project’s intended beneficiaries) to implementing partners is sensible and acceptable, as long as there is a fairly uniform understanding of what actions must, at a minimum, be taken to ensure such participation. The approach taken by the project has been to encourage partners by presenting them with published information about how communities and beneficiaries have participated in different TICW project activities,²⁸ without setting minimum standards for such participation. It was not clear that this resulted in adequate efforts to guarantee participation in all parts of the project.

The Final Evaluation of Phase 1 of the project had already noted that, “Development and implementation of participatory approaches are still not fully understood” and recommended that:

“Overall, the project could give more attention to ensuring that participatory approaches, to underpin methods and tools, are understood and encouraged throughout all project interventions, and right through the development process”.

In response, TICW staff are reported to have received clear instructions to promote ‘ownership’ and ‘participation’ and to develop ‘meaningful youth and child participation.’²⁹

Participatory approaches involving the project’s partners in the TICW’s planning exercises were clearly visible in each country, with ‘participatory stakeholder ownership exercises’ (PSOE) being held either before or soon after Phase 2 of the project started in each country, sometimes followed by other ‘stakeholder ownership exercises’ at other levels (fore example, in Viet Nam in each of the three provinces involved in TICW’s Phase 2). In Cambodia, the project held national stakeholder workshops before the start of Phase 2 phase which were very much appreciated. In Lao PDR too, both TICW and government partners held participatory consultative meetings all the way down from central, through provincial, to district and village level.

In terms of child participation, the evaluators were told that IPEC has a positive and proactive approach and sees child participation as intrinsic to its work.³⁰ They were aware that, during Phase 1, the TICW project had worked closely with other organizations based in Bangkok, in the Regional Working Group on Child Labour (RWG-CL) to identify appropriate ways in which children could participate in efforts to stop child labour. This

strategic planning exercises, including the design of strategic programme impact frameworks (SPIF) and participatory monitoring and evaluation.

²⁸ E.g. in the project’s publication: *First Hand Knowledge, Voices across the Mekong. Community action against trafficking of children and women. A ‘Good Practice’ publication*, ILO, Bangkok, 2005.

²⁹ In ‘Guiding Principles for Staff of TICW Project (Phase II), as revised during a project staff meeting in October 2003 (points 12 and 15).

³⁰ IPEC is reported to be developing its own guidelines on children’s participation, but this is not yet in use and the evaluators did not see a copy.

resulted in the publication of a practical handbook for managers.³¹ There is an expectation that Action Programme partners will consult with children and bring their voices to the table as well as through specific initiative aimed at enhancing child participation (such as the SCREAM initiative). The evaluators were told that any reservations that may appear stem from concerns about child protection and the need to ensure avoid tokenism that might arise, for example, by bringing children to adult meetings.

The Mekong Children's Forum, a joint initiative with SCUK, was widely seen as a positive achievement which brought the voices of children to the trafficking debate. In Cambodia for example, both government officials and TICW staff referred to this as a valuable and powerful initiative which gave children space to make a contribution to the trafficking debate; enabled the government to uphold its commitments to child participation made at Yokohama (the second world congress on the commercial sexual exploitation of children, held in 2001); and helped youth who participated to build their confidence and share experiences.

3.7 The project's sub-regional framework

At the beginning of Phase 1 of the TICW project, there was sufficient evidence of cross-border trafficking within the Greater Mekong Sub-region to anticipate that a sub-regional framework would be important in order to tackle these cross-border patterns.

In practice, while there is still evidence of cross-border and transnational trafficking within the Sub-region, in some cases evidence is now available that more individuals are affected by internal trafficking (e.g. in China). Some of the most significant transnational trafficking involves countries which are not covered by the TICW project (such as Myanmar as a country of origin of the vast majority of Thailand's foreign workers and Taiwan as a destination for women from Viet Nam). For both reasons, the sub-regional structure appeared to the evaluation team to have been less important during Phase 2 for the coordination of synchronised initiatives in two countries and more relevant in allowing knowledge and experience of preventive techniques to be shared systematically among the project countries. By contributing to the COMMIT process, TICW has also helped set up a framework to allow the governments concerned to hold each other accountable for the effectiveness of their efforts to prevent trafficking.

The sub-regional framework has also allowed the project to work closely with other anti-trafficking initiatives organized across the GMS region, such as a Save the Children UK sub-regional project.

While the sub-regional framework now appears less relevant for Yunnan, which has increasingly been drawn into close association with efforts to prevent trafficking in other provinces of China, it nevertheless appears important as a way of ensuring an exchange of knowledge and experience between Yunnan and other countries in South East Asia.

³¹ RWG-CL, Learning to Work Together. A handbook for managers on facilitating children's participation in actions to address child labour, Bangkok, 2003.

3.7.1 Synergies between the project and other initiatives in the Mekong Region

At the time Phase 1 of the TICW project started, numerous other organizations were engaged in activities concerning human trafficking in the GMS. In its first year of operation, the project and 12 other inter-governmental organizations and eight international NGOs agreed to set up the UNIAP which, backed by the UNDP, was established especially to coordinate the activities of other international organizations working on the trafficking issue in the sub-region. Despite this initiative, there is still a lack of good coordination between these organizations. The coherence at sub-regional level has improved, but the UNIAP has not been able to bring about good levels of coordination at national level.

At national level, there has been a tendency to establish separate institutions to respond to issues which are not separate, but which overlap, such as trafficking in persons, forced labour, the worst forms of child labour and the commercial sexual exploitation of children. Effective coordination between these is difficult to ensure when different ministries or agencies are in charge of separate initiatives. For example, a country such as Cambodia has a separate 'National Sub-Committee on Child Labour and other Forms of Commercial Exploitation of Children' and 'National Sub-Committee on Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Children', each responsible to separate ministries and apparently not inclined to cooperate or merge with the other. The difficulties have been exacerbated rather than resolved by the involvement of different inter-governmental organizations on the issues of human trafficking and child abuse, each with its own priorities, strategies and methodologies.

To some extent the ILO and the TICW project are contributing to causing the problem, as well as resolving it, even though this is for the most positive reasons. Their emphasis on trafficking for labour exploitation challenges the conventional understanding of what trafficking entails (and is right to do so). This is clearly a strength, but also complicates things. The ILO and the TICW project also work principally with Ministries of Labour and seek to promote the involvement of the ILO's social partners. This is potentially more divisive, for it means that a tension is created with decisions at national level to appoint ministries other than the Ministry of Labour to be the focal point on trafficking and to represent the government in the COMMIT process. Finally, the ILO appears out of sync with others because of the position it has to take with respect to Myanmar (and the ILO sits uneasily under the umbrella of COMMIT) because of the decision by the International Labour Conference resolution of the 87th Session (June 1999) on the widespread use of forced labour in Myanmar that Myanmar should cease to benefit from any technical cooperation or assistance from the ILO until such time as it has implemented the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry.

The Peer Group meeting convened for the evaluators to meet donors, inter-governmental organizations and international NGOs suggested that there is insufficient coordination at sub-regional level between different donors who finance anti-trafficking initiatives in South East Asia. The evaluators were also left with the impression that each inter-governmental organization/donor/international NGO prefers to get on with its own business rather than to modify the activities for which it has obtained funding in order to ensure coherence with others. While the evaluators heard of examples of good cooperation between inter-governmental organizations, the overall division of labour and levels of coordination between them sounded far from ideal.

In trying to understand the division of labour or responsibilities in relation to prevention, at both sub-regional and national level, the evaluators anticipated that they would come across

diagrams of the kind usually produced in the course of exercises to chart ‘Area of Impact’ in the context of SPIF (Strategic Programme Impact Framework) exercises, showing how IPEC’s initiatives are expected to complement those of other agencies active on related issues and how a set of separate interventions by many agencies are expected to bring about the changes necessary to end trafficking and exploitation. While this is only one way of portraying this division of labour, the fact that they did not come across such diagrams was possibly an indication that the exchange of information between organizations was not as thorough as it could be. Once again, it is worth stressing that this is not the fault of the TICW project, although the project has the potential to try and improve this state of affairs.

The evaluators recognized that most issues of coordination concerning inter-governmental organizations were beyond their remit or that of the TICW project and concern the revised role of the UNIAP in the sub-region.

3.7.1.1 The synergies with sub-regional inter-governmental processes (COMMIT)

The discussions involving COMMIT and its subsequent activities meant that the UNIAP came increasingly to play the role of COMMIT secretariat, rather than providing overall coordination to the anti-trafficking activities in South East Asia of the IGOs and NGOs which had joined it (the UNIAP’s original *raison d’être*). Relations between those involved in Phase 1 of TICW and the secretariat of the UNIAP had been relatively poor prior to 2004 and this had prevented good coordination. Relations between the two institutions have improved steadily since late 2003, increasing the potential for good coordination between TICW and the UNIAP. However, since late 2003 the UNIAP has been preoccupied with the specifics of the COMMIT process, rather than with ensuring the overall coordination of the efforts of international organizations such as the ILO and the coherence of their collective efforts to prevent trafficking in the GMS.

The COMMIT Sub-regional Plan of Action is not a blueprint for all the activities deemed necessary at sub-regional level, but nevertheless offers a different set of priorities and activities to the ones to which TICW had already committed itself. One of the five areas for activities in the MoU involves prevention (of trafficking). The Plan of Action sets out 11 areas for action, of which TICW is reported to be contributing to four: addressing Recruitment Practices (PPC 10), Tourism (11), National Plans of Action (3) and Multi-lateral assistance (PPC 4).

3.7.1.2 A special relationship with Save the Children–United Kingdom (SCUK)

At the time that the DfID was being asked by IPEC to consider financing Phase 2 of the TICW project, it was also being approached by Save the Children UK (SCUK), which was seeking further funding for its own sub-regional project against trafficking. DfID decided to encourage the two organizations to work together and they consequently met together on a number of occasions in 2003 (or 2002) to identify activities which could be conducted together.

The result of this ‘arranged marriage’ is that the TICW has benefited from SCUK’s considerable expertise with respect to child participation, while SCUK has benefited from the TICW project’s access to government institutions and officials. In this instance it appears that the two organizations would not have forged such close links if their mutual donor had not encouraged them to do so (even though the two organizations were already cooperating together in the framework of the Regional Working Group on Child Labour). As the formal relationship established between the two organizations has evidently been productive for

both, the evaluators concluded that it was good practice by the donor and an efficient use of resources to have obliged separate organizations to work together, even though one was an organization belonging to the UN system and the other was a non-governmental organization. Indeed, the evaluators wondered whether it would not be beneficial for donors to use similar influence to ensure greater coherence between the various other organizations involved in anti-trafficking work in the GMS.

4 The Process of Implementing the Project

4.1 The ILO's 'comparative advantage' in relation to other organizations implementing projects or programmes to stop human trafficking

Comparative advantage can be seen in various ways. The evaluators use this term to refer to institutional comparative advantage and the extent to which TICW is bringing the special expertise of the ILO as an institution to bear on the issue of trafficking, namely its focus on labour management and protection and tripartite access to employers and workers. While the project is adding value and contributing to the anti-trafficking agenda in the region, the evaluators felt that it was not using its institutional advantage to optimum effect. Cambodia and China are the only places where the project is making a distinct contribution which aligns with its institutional expertise. In Cambodia the project, through its work in destination areas, has a strong focus on labour protection issues through trainings for local employers and workers on labour rights and standards; it has brought the issue of labour exploitation to the table, moving the focus away from sexual exploitation only; it is in the process of mobilizing workers and to a lesser extent employers. It has found the nexus between trafficking, labour protection, social partners more clearly than in other places. As such it appears to have carved a distinctive niche for itself, though its distinction may be undermined by doing more general work on prevention in sending areas, i.e. giving an overall impression that it is doing more general than specific work.

In the case of Yunnan, the TICW project's knowledge about human trafficking and techniques for preventing it, combined with the ILO's experience of managing work force migration have been used well at a time when the scale of internal migration within Yunnan Province and within China more widely have climbed enormously. In this case the benefits of mobilizing employers' organizations are beginning to make themselves felt, while workers' organizations have not yet played such a direct role.

Somewhat surprisingly, in most cases, other organizations view as partners by the TICW project were unable to cite examples of the ILO's work with employers/workers and labour protection as its comparative advantage. Most seemed unaware of it and occasionally even wondered what ILO's *locus standi* was in getting involved in trafficking work, suggesting that the message explaining these linkages was not being conveyed to others clearly enough.

While the project may not be utilising all its comparative advantages, it is certainly giving added value to the issue of trafficking and tackling the problem from different angles in comparison to many other organizations:

- Although others are involved in advocating more effective law enforcement and facilitating the recovery and reintegration of victims, relative few are focusing specifically on the prevention of trafficking in the sub-region. Many of those who have started work on prevention have limited their efforts to disseminating information about the risks associated with trafficking ('awareness raising'), whereas the ILO and TICW have explored a range of other methods of preventing trafficking.
- It is making linkages between human trafficking and the issue of migration, enabling the authorities in China to identify a range of measures to prevent trafficking as appropriate to implement in their national context of mass rural-urban migration. In a country where the scale is very different, Cambodia, the project has been supported three workshops for government officials, in conjunction with the IOM, on prevention in the framework of migration and the MoU on (migrant) employment between

Thailand and Cambodia. It has also organized a tripartite workshop (on information and recommendation sharing) to contribute to improving labour migration management.

- It is working at grassroots level, unlike most other international agencies. Although this might be viewed by donors and others as getting involved at an inappropriate level (instead of concentrating on influencing central government policy), this gives TICW and the ILO experience which is invaluable when it comes to knowing what preventive measures should be mainstreamed as government policy.
- It has a strong gender-focused programme. The recent DfID review, “Evaluation of DfID Assistance: Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment” (draft report produced in February 2006), commends the ILO’s rights-based and participatory approach used to addressing structural gender inequalities that are the root causes of trafficking.
- It focuses on ways of protecting the rights of people in the world of work more than others.
- In addition to advocating respect for international legal standards (the ILO conventions), it works closely with governments, demonstrating how such standards can be implemented.
- It is able to access and mobilize high levels of government.
- It has credibility with donor governments and the governments of the countries it works in.
- Its publications are high quality and professionally produced in a good format.
- It deploys professional expertise on the issue of micro-finance (and probably has more relevant expertise than others involved in supporting micro-finance initiatives to prevent trafficking or to prevent people from having to migrate in vulnerable circumstances). It has a micro-finance specialist based in Bangkok, supported by the ILO’s Social Finance Unit in Geneva. The evaluators heard several people question whether the ILO was the right organization to be providing micro-finance at community level. The evaluators were impressed that in certain cases, such as Lao PDR, the ILO and TICW appeared to have considerably more micro-finance expertise than other organizations and was making an important contribution.
- It has other relevant technical expertise and substantial experience acquired in other countries, in particular on child labour, but also on human trafficking.
- It has experience of looking at how demand for cheap (or free) labour results in abuse and of what measures can be taken to reduce such demand.
- Other organizations noted that the ILO’s anti-trafficking efforts involve a more substantial investment in building the capacity of government institutions to manage efforts to prevent trafficking and regarded this as its advantage. Indeed, they appeared envious of the ILO’s ability to invest in capacity building. However, the TICW project’s capacity building efforts at central government level have tended to focus on its conventional partner, the Ministry of Labour, rather than on whichever ministry or agency has been given lead responsibility for implementing the government’s anti-trafficking plan or commitments made under the COMMIT process. The project’s capacity building activities consequently have not necessarily helped build coordination and coherence at national level within central government.

Evidently, in addition to these general points, in specific countries the TICW project’s activities give very specific added value. For example, in Lao PDR the TICW project has

come to be seen as something of a focal point for the media following its media initiative, after the UNIAP convened a training workshop about media and the trafficking issue.

4.2 The TICW project's timeframe

The TICW project has been exceptional among anti-trafficking initiatives in so far as it acquired funding from the same donor over a period of eight years. IPEC staff clearly valued this and commented on the generosity of the donor. Unlike projects of only two or three years' duration, this is enough time to make a difference.

The transition from Phase 1 to Phase 2 was nevertheless marked by a hiatus and the reality in several countries visited by the evaluators is that direct assistance activities were organized during 2002 (as part of Phase 1) and did not restart until 2004 or 2005. While this was unavoidable for administrative reasons (as the two phases were separate projects), it reduced their continuity and made it more difficult for Phase 2 activities to pick up directly from where Phase 1 activities had left off. Indeed, in Viet Nam they have still not started properly. Although it is clear that there are challenges in addressing destination area issues, practical work has started in destination areas in Cambodia and Thailand rather late in the lifecycle of the project. In Lao PDR too, the original VDF model established in Phase 1 was, though inadequate, allowed to remain in its original form for a long time, with the result that a new model is only just in place and still requires testing.³²

The result is that half way through Phase 2 the project's experience with direct assistance activities is less advanced than one might expect. Those who designed Phase 2 evidently had ambitious expectations, planning to cease direct assistance activities by mid-way through Phase 2 (i.e. the beginning of 2006) in order to concentrate instead on mainstreaming the lessons learnt at policy level through continuing capacity building and promotion of good practice and knowledge. This was probably unrealistic. In practice, the evaluators felt that there were still important lessons to learn from direct assistance and that, rather than terminating all direct assistance activities, these should be continued on a selective basis in areas where not enough has been learnt to know which activities should be mainstreamed.

4.3 Coordination with other actors involved in combating human trafficking in South East Asia

The comments made in section 3.7 above indicate that the evaluators felt there were continuing challenges to resolve as far as coordination is concerned. They were aware that some of their concerns arise from questions of international governance (concerning the division of labour between different inter-governmental organizations) which are beyond the capacity of the TICW project to address.

However, many of the project's successes are due to good coordination with others. Although the ILO and TICW played only a marginal role with respect to the COMMIT process, working with the UNIAP they found ways of taking advantage of the COMMIT process by organizing the Mekong Children's Forum in 2004 and the third session of SURAC (which was indirectly linked to the COMMIT meeting held in September 2005).

³² The model used in Phase 1 started only in late September 2002. The project's supervision of it came to an end in May 2003, with the end of Phase 1, although it continued to function as a credit institution. It was reviewed after operating for a year (i.e. in late 2003). In March 2004 the new VDF modal was developed and agreed. After that, the Action Programme with the new implementing agency was developed and implementation started in early 2005.

The Mekong Children's Forum saw an excellent level of cooperation with SCUK and following a joint training in December 2005 there is also high potential for SCUK to work further with the TICW project on promoting the participation of children in helping the TICW project achieve its objectives (and, indirectly, potential for this to bring wider benefits to IPEC and to TICW's implementing partners).

At sub-regional level coordination seemed surprisingly weak with UNICEF, which has particular expertise with respect to child protection. This expertise might be appropriate to consult in various sending areas, as well as with respect to migrant children who require general protection (for example in Thailand), rather than just protection in the workplace. The evaluation team were told by TICW staff that in South East Asia UNICEF had been giving priority to issues other than trafficking in children and women. However, they also took note of a number of initiatives to prevent child trafficking, which were taken by UNICEF, apparently without the prior knowledge of TICW.³³

When visiting different countries the evaluators noted that the project seemed to be selective in its relations with other agencies. Whilst it is a participant in networks, forums and so on, it generally only works closely with a small handful of organizations on specific subjects. The partners it works with at sub-regional level told the evaluators that they view the collaboration very positively, finding the relationship good and transparent, and viewing TICW as a project that is interested in partnerships, self-aware, and willing to learn. However, its exclusivity probably means that any lessons learnt by the TICW project are not shared widely with others.

In Cambodia, for example, the project has worked with UNICEF, e.g. developing the National Plan on Trafficking, and also with IOM on three training workshops on migration and labour, UNIAP on *ad hoc* initiatives and the Child and Love Foundation (Save the Children's partner in Cambodia) and others on the Mekong Children's Forum. According to project staff, these relationships are positive, although the evaluator was unable to make an independent assessment as she did not meet any of these other agencies.

In Lao PDR, apart from general networking activities, the main area of cooperation with other agencies in Phase 2 has been the media workshop initiated by UNIAP. The project also collaborated with SCUK over the Mekong Children's Forum as well as information/exchange visits, e.g. direct assistance programmes in December 2004. This collaboration was viewed positively from the project's point of view but again, the evaluator was unable to confirm this as the key officer in SCUK responsible for the children's forum was not available for interview. External coordination in Lao PDR is improving and respondents pointed out that coordination has improved significantly since a new TICW national programme manager was appointed, who has made an effort to interact with external agencies and to explain what TICW is doing. External observers are aware of the

³³ In April 2006, UNICEF announced it was supporting initiatives to tackle trafficking in women and children in Thailand, supporting drama productions for primary school children that were intended to warn them about the risk of being trafficked. See UNICEF press release dated 17 April 2006, http://www.unicef.org/protection/Thailand_33424.html. The following month, UNICEF announced that it was supporting a television programme in Lao PDR that was intended to warn young people about the risk of being trafficked ('Lao television drama highlights dangers of child trafficking', 26 May 2006, http://www.unicef.org/media/media_34087.html). The programme, entitled 'Lessons of Life' sounded very similar to one already shown in Cambodia, with TICW support, entitled 'Taste of Life' (see 6.1.4 below). However, the two initiatives were apparently uncoordinated, even though 'Taste of Life' was reported by UNICEF to have developed using resources provided by the UN Trust Fund for Human Security.

management and administrative difficulties which the TICW project has experienced in Lao PDR, and some remarked that this led to a degree of disorganization which made it difficult to cooperate with the project e.g. citing situations where TICW staff had not made it clear which costs it would be responsible for when embarking on joint initiatives with other agencies, resulting in a last minute scramble for funds.

Overall, the evaluators are left with an impression that the project works in a relatively self-contained way, often carrying on its work behind closed doors. The evaluators came across instances where the project and its work were not known to others, with some respondents unable to say what the project was doing both at sub-regional and country level. In Viet Nam, for example, representatives of other international organizations involved in anti-trafficking work said they thought the TICW project was making a positive contribution, but were unable to say what it was actually doing. Similar statements were made in other countries.

Clearly there are some good reasons for why the project has taken this approach. The project has consciously and commendably taken a backseat in some interventions to enable government partners to take ownership and credit for the work. Moreover, the external trafficking environment appears a competitive and fractious one, where few agencies are cooperating well. Nonetheless, the evaluators remain concerned that the project may have missed valuable opportunities for collaboration by not making itself better known, especially with organizations outside the UN system with which it may have complimentary strengths.

Coordination with other parts of the ILO and IPEC

TICW projects at country level have close relations with certain ILO or IPEC projects with which they are collaborating. In Cambodia, for example, the project is close to the IPEC project of support to the time bound programme which started recently (in September 2005), particularly because of staff movements between the two projects and informal personal relations. The project also works closely with the worker education officer in country. In Lao PDR, the project works with Wedge/Seed through harmonised interventions in some project sites: Wedge is carrying out interventions in the nine of the same target villages; and also provided technical support to the Village development funds through training of the committees and monitoring. In China there are no IPEC activities other than TICW and the other project dealing with human trafficking, CP-TING.

Country staff admitted that relations with other ILO projects in-country were often distant. There seems to be little more than the minimal of information exchange with other projects in Lao PDR except in the case of ILO-WEDGE (i.e. projects concerning social security, social welfare and insurance) and in Cambodia (many other projects). Both countries lack a country representative and are run on a project basis which inevitably has some consequences for internal coordination, authorisations as well as external representation despite the efficiency savings to be made from not having a country office.

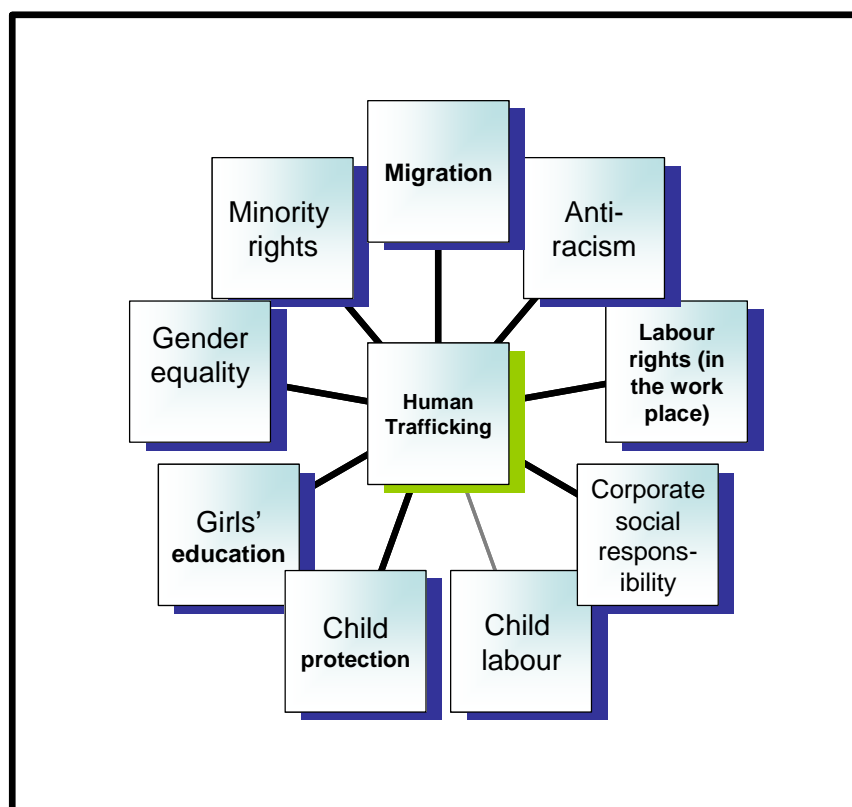
Although support from the sub-regional project was seen very positively, some staff lamented the lack of inputs from other technical experts in the sub-regional office in Bangkok, especially the advisors on employers' and workers' issues, vocational training and microfinance (other than in Lao PDR). This is not the case with all technical experts, for the Bangkok-based micro-finance expert has been very active in advising on the village development funds in Lao PDR and inputs seem to have been key in redesigning a more successful and appropriate model. Overall, though, it is not clear when and how the project has had access to technical expertise in other parts of the ILO and whether it has been able to do so to the optimum extent possible. Even with the micro-finance expert, questions remain

as to why this input was not solicited earlier on (in Phase 1), as better advice would probably have helped the project make more progress in Phase 1, rather than having to revamp in Phase 2, and leaving the efficacy of the new model still to be judged.

There is evidently some exchange of experience and expertise between the various IPEC projects which involve trafficking. As part of the new department on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, a working group was set up to coordinate the work on trafficking done across the IPEC and the ILO Programme on the Declaration. As a result it appears that there could have been less systematic exchanges and learning between the TICW project and others. As the TICW project is in many respects the 'senior sister' (i.e. started before the others and consequently has accrued more experience than others), this may mean that other IPEC projects on trafficking have lost some of their opportunity to learn from the TICW project, while the TICW project itself has probably not lost out at all.

Within the ILO and beyond there are potentially many different issues on which the TICW project needs to coordinate its activities: these are illustrated in Diagram 1.

Diagram 1: The different facets of human trafficking requiring coordination between TICW



and others in the ILO or in other organizations

The evaluators heard about links that the project had with other parts of the ILO on most of these. The ones which the evaluators could not confirm concerned minority rights, child protection and corporate social responsibility. On the first of these, the evaluators understood that UNESCO had lead agency responsibility in Thailand as far as ‘hill tribe’ minorities are concerned, while UNICEF evidently has most experience with regard to child protection.

On the issue of corporate social responsibility (CSR), it is evidently not within the ILO that the TICW project requires coordination, but rather with ILO constituents who are working on issues of corporate social responsibility in the GMS which relate to the economic sectors about which the TICW project is also concerned. The best solution might be to encourage national employers’ organizations to consult the experience of both the International Organization of Employers and specialist CSR bodies, such as the Global Reporting Initiative and the DfID-supported Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI).³⁴ Evidently, this is a delicate issue, for Ministries of Labour might not think it appropriate for the TICW project to be in direct contact with labour rights organizations or NGOs which document violations of labour rights and protest against them. Similarly, the ILO’s rules and ethics prevent it from being in direct contact with individual companies (such as those exporting products from the GMS who also belong to the ETI).

³⁴ <http://www.globalreporting.org> and <http://www.ethicaltrade.org>. See: DfID, Labour Standards and Poverty Reduction, London, May 2004.

4.4 Administrative or management issues which have affected the project's implementation

4.4.1 Issues arising in the course of the implementation of the project with partners

The evaluation team heard many complaints from partners about ILO procurement procedures and reported delays in the start-up of their Action programme or other activities. For example, in Cambodia, central level partners complained that feedback from the sub-regional level took four to five months, with the project delayed from 2005-08 to 2006-08 causing implementers to blame them. One Action Programme partner said the procurement process had begun in 2004 and that they had only just received the endorsement. Delays were also reported in Lao PDR. In Thailand, the Mirror Arts Foundation reported that it had found separate finance to cover the long gap between the two phases of the TICW project (from May 2002 until July 2004). The Foundation naturally wanted to maintain the expertise it had built up (and hoped to build further in Phase 2), but the fact that funding came from a project limited in time naturally made this impossible. It is a contradiction frequently noticed in other places. Unfortunately it can lead to hardship, with partners struggling to pay salaries to staff on the ground.

Clearly in many cases these delays are an inevitable result of rigorous ILO procedures which have developed over time. Some of the historical reasons for these procedures in IPEC included the need to ensure procedures developed for new types of partners were compliant with ILO procurement procedures. The problem may be exacerbated sometimes by a failure of IPEC staff to adhere to these deadlines. Although the evaluators were unable to investigate individual complaints, the level of complaints does raise questions as to whether staff themselves are always dealing with these matters expeditiously and on time. Delays may also be caused for some exceptional reasons, e.g. internal management issues in Lao PDR. Finally, delays are often caused by external factors outside TICW's control. In Lao PDR for example, the start of the programme was also set back because of government delays in ratifying ILO Conventions 138 and 182 as well as by changing officials in the Labour Ministry. In other cases, partners themselves are keen to get started, deliberately bringing their projects forward of agreed deadlines and unrealistically expecting that the TICW project will be able to provide them with money as quickly as they would like to spend it, rather than at the time agreed. This was the expectation of the NGO working in Thailand at Samut Sakhon.

The evaluators also took note of the donor's view that the reports which IPEC requires all sub-contractors (i.e. partners implementing Action Programmes and some other activities) to submit periodically are too onerous.

While the difficulties caused by the rigorous ILO procedures and processes are obvious, the evaluators also noted some benefits. It is evident that such stringent procurement and reporting requirements provide a sound mechanism for accountability to donors and an important protection and safeguard for staff and partners against corruption, both internal and external. In Cambodia, the difficult socio-economic context lends itself to culture of bribery and corruption at worst and an expectation of backhanders for cooperation at best. In such an environment, the rigorous procedures are an important safeguard both for donor money and for organizational and individual integrity. ILO's stringent management protocols also appear to have been deployed effectively in cases of internal corruption, with the CTA efficiently dealing with the isolated cases of staff misconduct that have arisen in Lao PDR.

Whilst some partners made unfavourable comparisons to other organizations (who have less complex procedures, pay more generous per diems, etc.), others expressed gratitude that they had learnt good project management skills which should stand them in good stead for working with other donors. Indeed, it was also suggested that organizations are keen to work with ILO because the stringent procedures give them added credibility and give donor confidence.

Thus while the procedures are an integral part of the way ILO works and in the view of the evaluators, have some benefits and should not be compromised, some further efforts could be made to ease the process:

- The evaluators would advise that staff at sub-regional and country level be meticulous in ensuring that they observe established procedures and timelines to ensure partners are not further incapacitated.
- More could be done to introduce and explain ILO procedures to partners at the outset. Clearly, much is already being done and a number of country programmes mentioned training programmes for Action Programme partners. However, nonetheless it is worth reiterating explanations of procedures and timeframes. The evaluators also noted that staff in different locations have developed different strategies for helping partners through this process and that it would be worthwhile finding ways to enable staff cross country to share these tips and experiences. For example, some officers in Cambodia described how they coach partners over time so that they are ready to prepare the narrative and financial reports when they become due, e.g. by encouraging partners to compile information on a daily basis; warning them well in advance of reporting deadlines; and then sitting with them to plan the report.

Another management issue that was raised on several occasions was that Action Programmes were too short, ranging from one to two years: an inadequate scope both in terms of budget and time for dealing with such complex social issues. It is noteworthy that TICW staff on numerous occasions commented on the generosity of DfID in giving them long-term funding for 8 years, which gave them stability to properly develop their ideas. DfID was also perceived as a generous donor as it did not burden the project with unrealistic targets and quantitative measures. It is indeed a pity that TICW was not able to transfer this same security to its partners and offer longer-term Action Programmes (although the evaluators recognized that some partners had worked with TICW sequentially on several different Action Programmes, such as the Mirror Arts Foundation in Thailand).

4.4.2 Internal management and administrative issues within the TICW project

The evaluators were told by various project partners that TICW staff were diligent and industrious in their work. For example, one person commented that staff were really hardworking, committed and very interested in doing the job properly (and compared them favourably to the staff of other UN agencies). This suggested that the TICW project has its own ethos and organizational culture and does not simply depend on strong personalities to drive it forward.

The various TICW country teams spoke highly of the support received from the sub-regional team in Bangkok. In Lao PDR, the national programme officer found the team very responsive and provided very good support even when they were busy.

The role of the Bangkok-based Programme Officers is both procedural and to give technical back-up and support on strategic issues and to pick up where the approach at country level is not in line with IPEC or TICW policy. For example, the Programme Officer suggested a revision to the Cambodia proposal on MCF on the grounds that it was not participatory enough. The Programme Officers visit occasionally and support is provided on a request basis, e.g. Lao PDR requested two visits a year (although there were reported to have been no less than eight visits between June 2004 and June 2005). The evaluators wonder whether this relationship could be further strengthened as, particularly in countries where the TICW national team does not have access to other ILO staff, an outside strategic view might help develop and refine the project's activities on a continuing basis. Even where things are functioning well an outside perspective would be helpful from time to time.

In addition, more supervision is required by the project's sub-regional team in Bangkok of the quality of some aspects of the activities implemented at national level: particularly the nature of the *participation* of the project's intended beneficiaries (in all phases—design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation) and the collection of evidence about the effects of the project's activities, which needs to be of good enough quality to allow evidence-based conclusions to be drawn about the effectiveness of the activities (and consequently whether they are appropriate to replicate or mainstream).

It was clear that some country staff are overstretched, in part because they spend considerable time observing the ILO's procedures (and helping partners to do so). Staff in various locations (e.g. Thailand, Lao PDR) felt they did not have not enough time to devote to technical issues (concerning methods to prevent trafficking).

When staff with a specific job description are asked to take time away from their routine work in order to concentrate on a separate task, this may result in exhaustion unless the staff member is replaced on a temporary basis or provided with temporary support. It was sensible that staff with previous experience of facilitating child participation and knowledge of child protection procedures took on work in relation to the Mekong Children's Forum in 2004, which went beyond their regular work. In Viet Nam this did not displace routine work, as the Government of Viet Nam had not yet agreed to Phase 2 of the TICW project going ahead. However, in Thailand it apparently put an inappropriate level of strain on the staff member based in the north of the country.

4.4.2.1 Staff training

In view of the scale of the TICW project and the turn-over of staff (and resulting recruitment of new staff), there does not appear to be enough staff training. New staff are evidently expected to arrive with a variety of the skills needed (e.g. skills in evaluating the quality of proposals or facilitating meetings, including those involving children), so their initial training focuses on showing them ILO and TICW procedures. The current system of training new staff includes briefing sessions for a few days in Bangkok supplemented by participation in trainings as and when they come up. So, for example, the National Programme Officer in Lao PDR had three days of briefings on recruitment and subsequently participated in trainings on child participation in November 2005 and participatory monitoring in March 2006.

Given time and budget constraints, there are limitations in what can be done to bring new staff up to speed. However, the complexity and relative novelty of the issues which the project is dealing with mean that additional training is needed at an early stage on issues

related to trafficking, as well as ILO procedures. This would increase the ability of new staff to give guidance to Action Programme partners.

4.4.2.2 Overall management of the project

The donor noted that during Phase 1 of the project the CTA had been assisted by a deputy, but that, although Phase 2 is a bigger project, the CTA has no deputy. In principle the absence of a deputy CTA represents a progressive change in management technique in comparison to Phase 1, with more authority delegated during Phase 2 to National Project Coordinators and less ‘hands-on’ management from the CTA in Bangkok. While nothing should be done to jeopardise this progressive delegation of authority to National Project Coordinators, they would probably benefit from more advice and monitoring by the project’s sub-regional managers (particular advice on overcoming obstacles and monitoring of the quality of the strategy implicit in the national programme). However, the evaluators noted that the CTA was being required to spend significant amounts of time addressing practical problems (such as staffing issues arising in the project office in Lao PDR) and that this detracted from her capacity to focus on the project’s overall strategy. They consider it absolutely vital for the project’s managers (i.e. the CTA and anyone else in a managerial role at sub-regional level) to provide leadership and to focus attention on the project’s strategy in individual countries, as well as at sub-regional level. This means that, without ‘micro-managing’ the project from Bangkok, there should be more visits to each country and more time spent by the project’s managers, (a) checking that the strategies chosen by national project coordinators are sensible and (b) helping them resolve problems which have come up within their national programme.

In Viet Nam, for example, although it is not obvious that more visits and contact between project staff in Bangkok and the National Project Coordinator could have reduced the delay before the DSEP signed a Letter of Agreement with the ILO to start the project’s Phase 2, it was clear in March 2006 that the national project coordinator needed relatively frequent opportunities to talk with sub-regional managers about ways of resolving the obstacles facing the project, in part because the obstacles were substantial and in part because he was relatively new to TICW.

In Thailand none of the same difficulties created by distance from the project’s headquarters apply, but here too the management of the country programme needs to be strengthened. This could be achieved by ensuring that all aspects of TICW’s work in the country are under the responsibility of a single person.³⁵ Both Cambodia and Lao PDR would also benefit from more ongoing strategic support from the sub-regional level (quite aside the ‘special’ support Lao PDR has received in recent times).

In addition, for the rest of the project its management needs to give high priority to ensuring that the project’s learning processes (in relation to ‘good practice’, as well as all the other lessons which can be learned from such a large and long project as TICW) are working well (see 8.1 and 8.2 for further explanation on this point).

³⁵ During Phase 2 a National Project Manager has been responsible for work in the destination sides as well as national level coordination, while a National Project Officer has been responsible for the work in the three Northern provinces. While this division of labour seems to have worked well, some aspects of the national strategy (on advocacy) were being determined elsewhere (at sub-regional level), creating some confusion about who was responsible for what.

The strengthening in management which the evaluators would like to see could be achieved by reorganizing staff responsibilities within the TICW office in Bangkok.

4.4.2.3 Management issues which have arisen in the Lao PDR

The country programme in Lao PDR has undergone serious internal management and staff misconduct problems. These have been dealt with swiftly by the CTA and have consumed much time and attention from managers at the sub-regional level. The legacy of these difficulties continues to undermine the work at country level. The office is still short of staff and this will be compounded in the near future with further staff departures leaving the National Programme Manager severely overstretched. TICW should be aware that these internal management issues and relative disorganization are being noted outside the project, with some external actors in Lao PDR remarking that this makes it difficult to collaborate with TICW.

There appear to be some issues about delays in the transfer of funds from the sub-regional office to Lao PDR which are sometimes causing country staff considerable inconvenience e.g. having to use their own money in advance for the mid-term evaluation.³⁶ No other countries reported problems with receiving payments and some such as Cambodia, had an established system (making requests in a timely way, following up with reminders) to ensure that transfers proceeded smoothly. The evaluation team recognized that this was part of the larger problems related to difficulties in the Lao office and recommends that procedures and timelines for payment claims are once again clarified.

The Lao PDR office also seems to spend an inappropriate amount of time in translating documents to/from the local language, time which detracts from the programme's ability to provide technical support. In other offices, such as Cambodia, staff hire translators or ask Action Programme partners to translate documents, themselves thereby saving themselves time. Clearly the possibilities of paying others for translations seem to be available, but again this problem seems to stem from recent difficulties in the Lao PDR office and the need to ensure authorizations and checks. The legacy of these management difficulties continues to put a strain on the country project and is inhibiting it from making the most of its final phase.

³⁶ This are due in part to the fact that there is no ILO country office and transfers from Bangkok take between one and two weeks, and, according to the Sub-regional office, in part to the fact that requests for payments are submitted late by the office in Lao PDR.

5 Project implementation at Sub-Regional level – Performance and Achievements

The TICW project is so large and its components so diverse that it is difficult to sum up its achievements briefly. This chapter reviews achievements at sub-regional level, while comments on the progress in each of the five GMS countries towards meeting the project's four immediate objectives are presented in the next chapter.

5.1 Policy making/Capacity Building

5.1.1 Coherence at sub-regional level resulting from coordination with other anti-trafficking initiatives in the sub-region

The project's priority at sub-regional level has been to coordinate its activities with the UNIAP and SCUW, rather than with other relevant international initiatives, such as those initiated by UNICEF, the IOM or by the Asia Regional Cooperation to Prevent People Trafficking (ARCPPT). The evaluators did not meet representatives of UNICEF or the ARCPPT to find out if or how their activities were coordinated with those of the TICW project or influenced by them. They were told by TICW staff that UNICEF was not giving high priority to the issue of trafficking (and, implicitly, did not wish to spend time coordinating their efforts with those of others). The evaluator who monitored media reports during the following months was consequently surprised and somewhat dismayed to learn of several UNICEF initiatives in Lao PDR and Thailand, which appeared to merit close coordination with others involved in efforts to prevent child trafficking, such as the TICW project.³⁷

5.1.2 The reestablishment of the SURAC in 2005

When a COMMIT summit of senior officials ('SOM') was held in September 2005, the ILO organized a session of SURAC alongside it, the first SURAC meeting organized during Phase 2 of the TICW project and in practice a qualitatively different type of meeting to the two sessions organized during Phase 1. While institutionally separate from COMMIT, the aim was to allow the ILO's tripartite constituency (of Ministries of Labour and representatives of employers' and workers' organizations from five out of the six countries represented at COMMIT meetings) to discuss the COMMIT process and feed their views back into the COMMIT process. The SURAC meeting was attended by more than 40 participants and had the theme of "Policy Mainstreaming: The Labour and Employment Perspective in Taking Action Against Human Trafficking".

The SURAC meeting was reported by TICW staff to have helped increase the commitment of the ILO's tripartite constituency in all five countries to taking action to prevent human trafficking and thus played a role in part as an advocacy activity by the TICW project to encourage support for and participation in the project by social partners who were not sufficiently active in it – even though the meeting was essentially an advocacy activity by a tripartite meeting aimed at influencing the COMMIT process. It was also an opportunity to involve a social partner from at least one other country (a trade union centre from Malaysia).

³⁷ See Footnote 32, references to recent press releases issued by UNICEF.

Using SURAC meetings in this way, to widen the geographical scope of interest in sub-regional patterns of human trafficking, seemed positive to the evaluators.

The SURAC meeting served primarily as an opportunity to urge the government ministries taking part in the COMMIT process to involve their Ministries of Labour in anti-trafficking activities,³⁸ as well as to remind them of the potential for employers' and workers' organizations to play a role. While in this sense it appeared to the evaluators that the SURAC meeting had a rather self-serving role, they realised that if government officials involved in the COMMIT summit listened to the SURAC's message (i.e. the message that Ministries of Labour should be consulted about COMMIT initiatives by whichever other ministry was taking part in COMMIT meetings; and that Ministries of Labour and employers' and workers' organizations all potentially had an important contribution to make to stopping human trafficking) and this resulted in any improvement in inter-ministerial coordination, it would have merited the effort. The evidence available to the evaluators suggested that the September 2005 SURAC session did not result in Ministries of Labour or social partners being instantly invited to play a more substantial role (except perhaps in Lao PDR where the issue was formally put on the table). However, as in the case of the Mekong Children's Forum the year before, the fact that an advocacy initiative did not succeed at its first attempt is not a reason to abandon it. At the same time, organizing SURAC sessions may also not be the most effective way of encouraging better coordination of anti-trafficking activities between ministries or to promote the involvement of social partners in anti-trafficking activities. Indeed, these are two different objectives which may be better to pursue separately.

TICW staff and tripartite representatives endorsed the value of the SURAC process, citing it as a good way of learning and sharing experiences between countries, a way of connecting with the COMMIT process and highlighting the role of employers' and workers' organizations in this. Respondents maintained that there was a need for a separate process to COMMIT, given that ILO was unable to fully engage in COMMIT due to ILO resolution of the 87th Session (June 1999) of the International Labour Conference on the widespread use of forced labour in Myanmar, that Myanmar should cease to benefit from any technical cooperation or assistance from the ILO until such time as it has implemented the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry.

Although most respondents were supportive of this process, the evaluators were less convinced and feel that the SURAC process needs to move quickly to concrete action if it is to prove its worth and be more than a mere talking shop. There is little evidence of follow-up action except in Cambodia where tripartite members held a workshop after the September 2005 SURAC session to examine how employers could influence recruitment agencies to prevent trafficking. There is a need to think of more specific linkages, and merely providing a forum is not enough. Questions of sustainability are particularly pertinent. The evaluators did not meet any worker or employer participants at the SURAC session in any of the five countries, so did not hear their views.

³⁸ In Cambodia and Lao PDR they were reported to be excluded and not even consulted about the activities to which a different ministry committed the government at COMMIT meetings.

5.2 Advocacy and Mobilization

5.2.1 Progress in involving the social partners (employers' and workers' organizations)

The SURAC has been mentioned under 5.1.1 above. Some other general comments about the involvement of social partners are included in Chapter 6 below (as they do not relate specifically to the sub-regional level).

5.2.2 Mobilizing the project's intended beneficiaries – The Mekong Children's Forum: an example of 'good practice' for the ILO and IPEC to replicate

The Mekong Children's Forum was held in Bangkok in September 2004 and was preceded by national forum meetings of children in each of the project's five countries. It was organized relatively rapidly in order to give children from the five countries an opportunity to try and influence decisions which were scheduled to be taken by government representatives at the COMMIT meeting in October 2004. Although it is not obvious that any decisions subsequently taken at that COMMIT meeting were directly affected by the views expressed at the Forum, the importance of the opportunity of influencing the COMMIT process (and, beyond it, the policies of the six governments involved in COMMIT) justified the costs of organizing the Forum, including the significant human cost to TICW staff of organizing a major event in which children participated, in rather less time than they needed.

Both the Mekong Children's Forum and the national forum meetings which preceded it were essentially exercises in advocacy: they were an opportunity to enable children to articulate their views and to use these to try and influence policy makers at the national and regional level. While the Mekong Children's Forum and the national forum meetings were good examples of child participation, it is important to note that they involved children's participation in advocacy, but not necessarily in other aspects of the project where the TICW project should also be seeking to advance children's participation, such as the design (or modification) of TICW activities affecting children.

It is clear to the evaluators that the Mekong Children's Forum and the national forum meetings were high quality exercises in children's participation, at which child protection (i.e. efforts to ensure that the children involved did not suffer any harm during or after their participation) was accorded suitably high priority.³⁹ This quality was made possible in part by the close involvement in four of the five countries of the TICW project's partner, Save the Children-UK. However, it was also made possible because of the experience of individual project staff (who had taken part in previous child participation exercises while working for other organizations) and without this experienced group of staff the Forum could probably not have been organized so effectively.

Some concerns were raised with the evaluation team about the possible harmful effects on children of talking to journalists or dealing with others who asked them questions which reminded child participants of abuse they had experienced. The evaluators were satisfied that no such harm had been caused and that children had not been put at unacceptable risk.

³⁹ The evaluators heard that protection issues had caused concern to TICW staff during the Mekong Children's Forum, principally when a child had been upset by a journalist's questions. The evaluators noted that at such events, the senior manager involved should ensure, prior to the event, that the policy on direct contacts between children and journalists or other adults is as clear as possible to ensure that the staff responsible for advocacy and public relations do not come into conflict with those specifically responsible for child protection.

Because the children's fora were essentially advocacy exercises, it was necessary to put some of the children who attended into direct contact with either journalists or other adults whose responsible behaviour could not be assured. To have tried to shield all the children involved from such direct contact would have defeated the purpose of the whole exercise.

Forums took place at both provincial and central levels in what was a landmark event in Cambodia enabling many children to participate. TICW's interest in child participation and child rights was seen as genuine and impressive. In both Lao PDR and Cambodia, the governments stated that the recommendations made by the children are under consideration but were not able to cite any specific changes in policy or practice flowing from the national forums. In Cambodia, one official said that the point about ensuring that victims are not victimized twice over by repressive government policies was strongly conveyed to them at that forum.

Whenever children are involved in advocacy, there are inevitably critics who express concern that the involvement of children was tokenistic. As it is not clear whether the government ministers attending the COMMIT meeting in October 2004 made different decisions as a result of hearing the recommendations and views formulated by children at the Mekong Children's Forum,⁴⁰ it would be possible to claim that the whole exercise was not worthwhile. However, to take this position would be to misunderstand what the objective of involving children was and where the weaknesses in an advocacy initiative lie.

The Mekong Children's Forum and the national forum meetings which preceded it set out to influence government policy. As such they played a role in relation to the TICW project's Objective 1 of developing and strengthening "frameworks, structures, policies, processes and capacity to address trafficking in children and women" at multinational and national level, as well as contributing to the project's Objective 3 (concerning advocacy and mobilization). Like any advocacy exercises, their success has to be judged in relation to what they set out to achieve and not just what they actually achieved. If none of the decisions taken at the COMMIT meeting in October 2004 was affected by the recommendations and views which children formulated, it is possible that these recommendations and views were proposed too late in the COMMIT process to be taken into account. It is also possible that the ministers and officials attending the COMMIT were so unused to taking the views of children (or others who are trafficked) into account that they were unable to respond appropriately. Both of these possibilities should prompt reflection within the staff of TICW and other organizations involved in the COMMIT process so that lessons are learnt about the most effective ways of enabling children and other beneficiaries to have their views taken into account. One lesson already learnt elsewhere is that it takes time for adult policy-makers to learn how to listen to children's views and to channel them into their own decision-making process (and for them to do so they have to be exposed repeatedly to the views of children through exercises such as the Mekong Children's Forum).

In the context of the TICW project, there appears to be no need to repeat the Mekong Children's Forum or the national forum meetings. However, it would be appropriate for TICW and its SCUK partner to follow up the recommendations made in 2004 by facilitating a dialogue between children and the individual policy-makers in each country who heard the

⁴⁰ The government minister from Cambodia who attended is reported to have said that the children's views and recommendations made at the Cambodian forum would be incorporated into Cambodia's 2005-2009 Plan of Action on Combating Trafficking. However, it was not clear to the evaluators whether he had followed through and ensured that their views were incorporated.

2004 recommendations (or who have replaced those who heard them in 2004), both to find out whether the recommendations were taken into account anywhere else and, if not, to pursue them. Just because they hit a brick wall, advocacy initiatives do not give up.

As far as the evaluators could establish, the Mekong Children's Forum and the national forum meetings remain virtually unique within IPEC and the ILO, both in the context of initiatives specifically designed to stop trafficking or to provide assistance to trafficked children and in the wider context of the IPEC's efforts to stop the worst forms of child labour. IPEC evidently supports other initiatives to enable children to exercise their right to express their views on matters affecting them.⁴¹ However, the information given to the evaluation team about participative initiatives such as SCREAM (Supporting Children's Rights through Education, the Arts and the Media) suggested that children involved in such initiatives were not involved in advocacy at the same level—of trying to influence policy-makers at national and sub-regional level. While exercises such as the Forum are relatively expensive to organize, there are evidently other opportunities in different regions of the world when it would be equally appropriate to ensure that the voice of key beneficiaries of the ILO's work is articulated to influence policy concerning trafficking or child labour.

5.3 Direct Assistance (revolving credit)

In 'sending areas' in all five project countries, the project has established revolving credit institutions in order to enable people in rural areas to invest in alternative livelihoods rather than migrating (and subjecting themselves to the risk of being trafficked).

The emphasis on revolving credit institutions was strongest in Phase 1. Even so, the evaluation team was invited to meet beneficiaries of these Phase 1 activities to hear about their continuing impact and benefits in 2006.

A great deal has been learnt by the TICW project about what works and what does not, in terms of revolving credit. The greatest success appears to have been in Lao PDR, where a common 'Village Development Forum' (VDF) has been established in Phase 2 of the project which shows good signs of being sustainable.

Nevertheless, much more could be learnt about the project's experience with revolving credit than has been formally learned so far. The evaluation team had some particular concerns about the way beneficiaries (for credit) were selected and about the likely impact of the credit in all five countries. While it is probably too late to address these fully within the life of the TICW project, it would still be useful for some attempt to be made. Essentially, the concern is that communities were targeted for preventive activities, rather than households or individuals within communities who were most likely to be trafficked. The selection was done by TICW's national and local partners, rather than by project staff. In numerous cases, therefore, married women with young children, who were relatively less likely to migrate (and to be trafficked) than younger girls and boys, benefited from the credit. While the credit concerned undoubtedly gave benefits to the community as a whole (rather than only the households which received it), the project has not gained sufficient experience of giving credit to households containing young people who are high risk of being trafficked, or the young people themselves, to draw conclusions about which individuals should be given credit for credit to function most effectively as a technique for preventing trafficking. This seems to the evaluation team to be a missed opportunity.

⁴¹ Guaranteed by Article 12.1 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

5.4 Opportunities offered by the project's sub-regional structure which do not appear to have been used yet

As noted in section 3.7, there was evidently some expectation at the outset of the project that its sub-regional structure would allow the project to address patterns of cross-border trafficking between GMS countries and ensure a series of coordinated initiatives in the five countries, rather than running five distinct and separate country projects. To a great extent neither of these expectations has been realized.

5.4.1 Cross-border patterns of trafficking

Phase 2 of the project has focused on some distinct patterns within the region, rather than on trafficking flows between different GMS countries which are relatively unimportant. For example, it is looking at patterns of migration and trafficking involving people from Cambodia and Lao PDR, and also from Myanmar, moving to Thailand. However, it is not focusing on the pattern of trafficking from northern Viet Nam to China, nor paying much attention to patterns involving Vietnamese women trafficked to Taiwan. Although the rapid assessment conducted in Yunnan in 2002 identified a pattern of cross-border trafficking (from China to Lao PDR and Myanmar), other sources of data evidently showed that the vast majority of migrants were on the move within Yunnan or to other destinations in China, and that it was more appropriate to focus attention on them. The focus of the TICW project in Yunnan has been on internal trafficking within China.

The priority given to migratory flows involving many women and children, rather than smaller movements of people which happen to be across an international border, seems sensible. The decision not to focus on a cross-border pattern which another agency has taken the lead for responding to also appears sensible.

5.4.2 Establishing links between stakeholders concerned about different ends of the same trafficking flow

One potential benefit of managing an anti-trafficking project in several countries at the same time is that the project can put organizations based at different ends of the same flow (or trafficking chain) into contact with each other and so complement each other's activities to prevent trafficking.⁴² In other parts of the world, this has allowed organizations in separate countries, concerned about the same trafficked children or adults, to compare their analyses of the causes and factors which deserve tackling with prevention initiatives.⁴³ Such cooperation is even more important in initiatives which involve helping trafficking individuals to recover and to return back home from their destination. Possibly the fact that the TICW project is not involved in such initiatives is one reason why it has not promoted contacts and exchanges of information between organizations based at different ends of the same flow, either when they are located in the same country or when they are in different countries. This may be a missed opportunity. It could help promote communication between

⁴² For example, under the heading 'Across the subregion', the Project Document suggests in section 2 that, "There is a strong need for technical support to be given to national counterparts in their efforts to combat trafficking, and to harmonize this at subregional level through exchange of experience that might in time lead to cross-border collaboration that is practical and has impact".

⁴³ For example see Terre des Hommes and Ndihmë për Fëmijët. Child trafficking in South-Eastern Europe: The Development of Good Practices to Protect Albanian Children. Terre des Hommes Foundation. Lausanne, 2005.

migrants (whether they have been trafficked or not) and the communities they come from and also provide organizations involved in prevention initiatives with valuable extra information about the factors which make some individuals more vulnerable to being trafficked than others.

5.4.3 Five separate country projects?

While the TICW sub-regional staff in Bangkok ensure that there are some exchanges of information between the separate country programmes, on the whole the project gives the appearance of being five separate country projects, sharing the same objectives but not working together closely. Evidently this is a delicate issue, for it would not be appropriate for the project's sub-regional managers literally 'to manage' all five country programmes, and it is reasonable that the strategies adopted in pursuit of common objectives differ from country to country. However, the evaluators concluded that some potential synergies between the different country components were simply not occurring; for example sharing information during the design of school based initiatives to prevent trafficking (including life skills), as well as information about their impact.

On a few occasions staff in Bangkok have worked closely with country staff on a good preventive initiative, such as the television soap in Cambodia, which presented information about trafficking, 'Taste of Life' (see 6.1.4 below).

On other occasions, direct assistance activities which it might have been sensible to coordinate between different countries, such as ones on developing class room materials on life skills or running revolving credit unions, have been developed in a single location, apparently without being linked to similar initiatives in other project countries.

6 Performance and Achievements in the Five Countries

This is a relatively long chapter, containing comments on the project's performance and achievements in five countries, so the section on each country is virtually a separate chapter. It is important to note that both evaluators visited project sites in Thailand, but that each of the four other countries were visited by only one evaluator, with each evaluator visiting two of them.⁴⁴

6.1 Cambodia

6.1.1 Summary

The project is making a distinctive contribution to the trafficking issue in Cambodia with its work in destination areas, having successfully found the nexus between labour protection, sexual exploitation, trafficking, safe migration and the engagement of workers and employers. It has had an important influence in shaping government policies and invested much time and effort in capacity building of officials - unfortunately, some of this capacity has been dissipated in a recent government restructuring exercise. The direct assistance work is paying impressive immediate dividends by improving the protection of vulnerable groups. Sustainability of this innovative and effective work is a challenge given the complexities of the external environment.

6.1.2 Direct assistance

Direct assistance in destination areas, a new intervention area following learning from Phase 1 of the project, is having some visible effects. The Child Safe Tourism Commission (CSTC) Action Programme involves training government officials to work at the grassroots level with workers and employers, passing on suitably tailored messages about trafficking and exploitation to a range of target groups. Early feedback on the CSTC trainings for trainers (ToTs) is positive with suggestions that it could be supplemented in a variety of ways: e.g., more in-depth training, as some still felt ill-equipped to train others; exchange visits between provinces; ensuring the inclusion of user-friendly tools and materials in the final training manual.

Trainings for grassroots target groups in Sihanoukville have recently begun and more practical interventions in individual cases are planned in due course. At central level, the CSTC has a clear two-pronged strategy of both education of and enforcement (both under labour and criminal law) against employers who fail to comply. However, the municipal level action programme in Sihanoukville seems to be taking a 'softly softly' approach focusing on persuasion and education, in an attempt to take a more 'positive' approach. This bears the risk that it is missing some of the worst offenders and only making superficial inroads into the problem. Reaching employers is a challenge and the strategy may need to be reoriented in the future if it does not yield the desired results.

Outreach to workers is much better, with the acknowledgement that access to the most exploited is obviously restricted, and that the project may be missing those who are most vulnerable.⁴⁵ In addition, not all labour issues of concern to the programme are enshrined in

⁴⁴Mike Dottridge went to China (Yunnan) and Viet Nam, while Asmita Naik went to Cambodia and Lao PDR.

⁴⁵ Indeed most of the employees met by the evaluator were males and females over the age of 18 and not

labour law; others are more a matter of negotiation between workers and employers. It seems an important next step, and one which the Action Programme is fully cognisant of, to enable workers to organize effectively through the stimulation of networks of workers, training on collective bargaining and so on.

Grassroots efforts in Sihanoukville are showing visible impacts despite the fact that the Action Programme has only recently started. The participants of training sessions are already able to cite concrete changes. For example, one employer had stopped sending female employees to guest rooms alone; another had changed working hours to keep in line with the law. Workers are being brought out of isolation and taught about their rights: some said employers had become more amenable to giving time off after the intervention of the project - one young girl said her working day had reduced by one hour and that her days off per month had increased from one to two. A focus group of 'beach children', mostly girls aged 13 upwards, who earn a living selling souvenirs on the beach, felt they had learnt a lot about the risks of trafficking and exploitation and felt better able to protect themselves, knowing the kinds of tricks brokers use, and how to report incidents to the police. Examples of behavioural change include always ensuring others know where they are; and going in groups to sell to tourists in quieter spots. Respondents were very positive about the quality of the training received, though more resources would enable the municipal trainers to use a greater variety of techniques.

The Khmer Women's Cooperation for Development (KWCD) Action Programme in Sihanoukville is a peer education initiative for sex workers involving self-help groups, savings activities and vocational training. This project has only been operational for several months but the differences being made to the lives of these young peer educators are laudable. They reported a new found confidence, an increased ability to stand up for themselves to customers and employers, better prospects for the future, and greater knowledge about trafficking. One girl said she had started work in a karaoke bar, completely oblivious to the risks she might face had it not been for the project. Others added that they had felt excluded from society before but the project had given them a sense of worth and recognition from others. The dedication of the girls to the project was also evident: as volunteer peer educators they had given much thought as to how they might interest other sex workers in the self-help groups. They had persevered, taking things step by step and devising various techniques e.g. approaching girls alone rather than in groups (as they were less likely to be laughed off), keeping meetings very short so that owners would not object; approaching girls in places where they would find a captive audience, such as beauty parlours; making appointments in advance at times which suited the sex workers, often at night. The girls in the self-help groups were less forthcoming about the difference the project had made to them, as compared to the peer educators who run the groups. Nonetheless they appreciated the solidarity and companionship they gained from these groups. The programme is in its early days, and impacts on individual lives take time; there is also the issue of high turnover with girls moving on to other locations.

6.1.3 Capacity building

The project has made a significant contribution to the policy agenda, for example by encouraging the Government to develop a new national plan on trafficking which goes beyond the earlier narrower focus on sexual exploitation and covers labour exploitation and the prevention angle. Trafficking and child labour issues have also been integrated into wider

squarely in the target group of the project.

national policies such as the poverty reduction plan, education for all, and the national strategic development plan. Both project staff and government counterparts recognized the important contribution of TICW to the policy framework.

For historical reasons, there are two national plans which are relevant to the project, the national plan on trafficking in persons and sexual exploitation and the national plan on the worst forms of child labour; the project falls uncomfortably between the two. The external set up is complex. A government restructuring exercise in 2004 split responsibilities for social affairs and labour through the creation of two separate ministries: one for social affairs, veterans and youth rehabilitation, and the other for labour and vocational training. The project comes under the Ministry of Labour and receives direction from the National Sub-Committee on Child Labour and other Forms of Commercial Exploitation of Children, which is not yet fully functional and lacks a chair. The reorganization appears to have left the Labour Ministry in a weakened state with a lack of adequate budget. Cambodia is still overcoming the decimation caused by its former regime and as such its economy is still struggling more than those of most of its neighbours in the sub-region. So while the government has a strong interest (as evidenced by the newly created department on child labour), it lacks resources for implementation affecting the willingness of government officials to collaborate without the offer of incentives.

The project seems to have little direct contact with the National Sub-Committee on Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Children which mainly takes a traditional angle to tackling trafficking – prosecution of criminals, reintegration of victims, etc. However, the issues are indivisible. For example, in Sihanoukville, police action on anti-trafficking has expanded considerably in the past year due to funding from another donor and this is no doubt having an important side-effect on the support provided to KWCD’s work—the project has very good support from the police, with the chief himself on 24 hour call and ready to respond to requests for help. As such one might question whether the TICW project is too disengaged from the country’s central level institutional apparatus to stop trafficking.

There are different committees in operation at the provincial level, in some places there are committees for child labour, in others, committees on child protection supported by UNICEF. TICW works within existing structures rather than seeking to duplicate. At both central and provincial levels, the project is trying to work with the labyrinth of ministries and departments concerned with these issues and is seeking to increase coordination through a variety of mechanisms e.g. setting up working groups involving different ministries, trying to ensure the committees are chaired by authoritative officials such as deputy provincial governors etc.

While TICW cannot take the credit for being a catalyst (since the government already had the intention of working on this issue), it can be credited with enabling the government to do so through the provision of budgetary and methodological support. TICW has invested considerable effort and resources in strengthening government capacities. Both central and provincial government officials recognized and valued its support in terms of project management, research, reporting as well as help with improving coordination among government actors. The project has carried out a series of capacity building activities in 2004-2005, e.g. a baseline survey, stakeholder meetings, an objective oriented project planning workshop, a design, monitoring and evaluation workshop; gender equality training; 3 R’s ‘Rights, responsibilities and representation’ (issues such as gender, trafficking, child labour); training workshops with IOM on the implementation of the MoU between Cambodia and Thailand on cooperation in the employment of workers; and the CSTC ToTs.

Despite these efforts, government capacity seems fragile in places and the evaluation team heard numerous requests for more capacity building and support. The government's internal restructuring led to the displacement of staff to new posts and an undermining of the capacities that had been built. Evidently, the loss of this capacity raises some questions about the nature of the capacity building that was done by TICW, as it seemed unable to withstand the impact of restructuring. The problem seems mainly at the central level where calls were made for more project management training as well as guidance on technical issues such as the legal framework, gender issues, reintegration services, working with victims and market analysis. The problem of lost capacity is less visible at provincial level as, despite the restructuring, most project representatives remain the same. TICW has itself observed training gaps in the monitoring of labour laws and working conditions, collective bargaining agreements, worker education, inspection and labour migration. These gaps need to be properly assessed by TICW through a training needs assessment.

Many Action Programme partners acknowledged that TICW had brought a new perspective to the issue of trafficking and helped them to think about labour exploitation and labour standards. In Sihanoukville, government officials were well versed in these interlinkages and fully aimed their programme at labour protection issues in hotels, guest houses and restaurants, responding to the possibility of exploitation both by tourists and locals. Provincial officials from other destination areas did not all demonstrate the same breadth of understanding to the evaluation team, with some still focused on sexual exploitation and abuses by tourists.

6.1.4 Advocacy and awareness raising

A particularly original intervention, initiated by TICW's sub-regional office, has been the inclusion of trafficking issues into a well-known Cambodian television soap opera, 'Taste of Life', produced by the BBC World Service Trust.⁴⁶ The project commissioned the inclusion of this issue into a number of episodes and was able to play an important role in crafting the messages that were conveyed through the soap opera. The story line did well and continued for several more episodes, outside the scope of the TICW contractual agreement. It also spawned two follow-up radio phone-ins. The BBC has a dedicated research team which carries out audience research. The pre-test showed the story line was positively received and the impact survey will be available in the near future.

The use of the Trust's expertise could be explored in other countries, for example for a mass media campaign in Lao PDR, either using TICW or other funding. While the initiative is a positive one, government officials pointed out the need for more direct and obvious media interventions as not everyone would pick up on subtle messaging of the kind used in 'Taste of Life', nor does the whole population have access to electricity and television.

Apart from 'Taste of Life', advocacy activities have tended to focus on events such as an extended celebration from Children's Day on 1 June through to Child Labour Day on 12 June. The idea was proposed by the project and positively received by government. The project has done other important work in the form of lobbying and awareness raising both

⁴⁶ Much of the BBC World Service Trust's work, including 'Taste of Life', is funded by DfID and the evaluation team is unable to say if there were potential issues of concern to the donor, e.g. double-funding, or whether this was an example of synergy and making the most of two different streams of funding available from the same donor.

with government officials and at the grassroots level as described above in the Direct Assistance/Capacity Building sections.

6.1.5 Knowledge base

The project carried out four studies in 2004 and a baseline survey in the tourism and entertainment sector. The CSTC has an impressively specific set of statistics of workers and employers in destination areas though there are inevitable issues about validity and accuracy given the subject matter. The project may wish to consider ways of amalgamating this information from different provinces in a shared database.

The project has carried out research to explore the experiences of both internal and cross-border migrants. Studies on exploitation within Cambodia, e.g. beer girls in Sihanoukville and hotel/guest house workers in Siem Reap, raise some issues about labour conditions but the findings generally revealed less evidence of abuse than might be expected in studies of trafficking for sexual exploitation. This does not mean the studies were not worthwhile, as it is evidently very useful to have evidence to show that trafficking is either not occurring or not occurring much in certain sectors of employment which have been rumoured to be plagued by trafficking. It is worth noting that the young sex workers participating in the KWCD project had the most heart-rending stories to tell about trafficking of any beneficiaries met in Cambodia or indeed elsewhere in the sub-region. This tends to reinforce the view that trafficking for sexual exploitation is the most serious problem. The project, having got labour exploitation on the agenda, should continue to make efforts to document these experiences, to ensure the subject stays there. The evaluation team came across anecdotal accounts of labour exploitation, e.g. in domestic work, and the project would do well to collect evidence about such cases.

6.1.6 Sustainability

Sustainability is the critical challenge facing the TICW project in Cambodia. Given the complicated fit of the project with the external structure, it seems likely that some parts of its work will simply fall through the cracks when IPEC and the TICW project is no longer present to steer things through. There seems to be a heavy reliance on TICW's knowledge of how the jigsaw fits together and its efforts to coordinate a set of disparate government actors. Some of the work may be retained by certain ministries that have a strong interest, e.g. training initiatives by the CSTC, but an overall, the holistic approach may be lost. Some issues may simply fall off the table, not really fitting in properly anywhere, e.g. much work in destination areas concerns working children in hotels and restaurants, and if this is not considered a worst form of child labour it may fall out of the purview of the National Committee established under Convention 182; likewise labour protection work in destination areas with adult workers does not naturally fit under this committee and may depend on the interest of the Labour Ministry for its continuation. TICW probably finds itself straddling different mechanisms in other countries too but the problem seems especially pronounced in Cambodia.

The Government has expressed interest in continuing TICW's work. However, without the resources which the project provides, compounded by the difficulties caused by the structural complications, sustainability seems uncertain. The country programme's approach is to support the Ministry of Labour to fight for its budget by providing it with evidence of good practice. However, one might question the adequacy of this approach and whether the project ought not to plough in more money or help with finding new donors. Cambodia has been

described by some as a “donors’ paradise”, and while there are few engaging with child labour issues (only DfID and USAID), there remains the potential to bring others on board during the remainder of the project’s life. One might also question whether the project has been strategic enough in how it engages with Government. The external structure is complicated but the project has not made its life any easier by engaging with so many different ministries and departments. The country team with the sub-regional office should think through strategies for sustainability. One possible approach might be for the project to consolidate its efforts with the Ministry of Labour, the most likely standard-bearer of future work on this issue, rather than maintaining complex implementation mechanisms involving many different actors.

6.2 China (Yunnan Province)

6.2.1 Summary

Two rural districts in southwest Yunnan Province (near to China’s borders with Myanmar and Lao PDR) were involved in Phase 1 of the TICW project, both of them categorized as ‘sending’ districts, i.e. containing communities from which people were migrating to cities in Yunnan, other parts of China or even other countries. A significant proportion of the population of the two districts belong to minorities. In Phase 2 four rural districts were added, along, for the first time, with two ‘receiving’ districts in Yunnan Province’s capital city, Kunming.

Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the TICW project have occurred at an important juncture in China’s economic and social development, at a time when the authorities were becoming increasingly worried that unregulated migration could result in social unrest and identified what they call ‘blind migration’ as a risk both for the individuals involved and as far as wider social and political stability is concerned. The authorities are consequently keen to promote officially approved channels for migration within China (organized by labour bureaux in both sending provinces and receiving provinces) and to discourage informal or illegal recruitment systems.

While ‘blind migration’ does not necessarily result in trafficking and ‘promoting officially approved channels for migration within China’ is not automatically the same as the TICW project’s promotion of ‘safe migration’, there is nevertheless a significant overlap. The authorities in Yunnan and subsequently other areas of China have consequently been keen to make use of the TICW project’s expertise (and the ILO’s) in preventing trafficking. This political preoccupation with ‘blind migration’ is one reason why the TICW project in Yunnan has re-oriented from an initial focus on cross-border trafficking of women and girls belonging to minorities to taking action to prevent abuse of children and young women moving from rural areas to cities in China in general, continuing to address the situation of minorities but also focusing on the abuse of migrants belonging to the Han majority community.

The project has achieved an enormous amount, particularly during Phase 2. Much of its success is due to the high levels of commitment demonstrated by the project’s partners, the All-China Women’s Federation (ACWF) Yunnan Provincial Project Steering Committee and others, but it is clear that the project has benefited enormously from the expertise and dynamism of the TICW Provincial Project Coordinator in Yunnan, Ms Zhu Huie.

A meeting to consider how to replicate the good experiences of the TICW project in Yunnan was held jointly by ACWF and ILO already in late 2002⁴⁷ and during the first year of Phase 2 a TICW staff member was asked to design a similar project to be implemented in five other provinces of China (the CP-TING project): Anhui, Guangdong, Henan, Hunan and Jiangsu Provinces. This four-year project began in April 2004.

Within China there is clearly an important synergy between the two ILO-IPEC projects. Both have the same principal partner, the ACWF.

6.2.2 Capacity building

The evaluation focused on achievements in building the capacity of government at local, medium and higher levels to prevent trafficking (in Pu'er Country, Simao City and at for Yunnan Province as a whole).

Whereas activities in Phase 1 focused on two rural districts, Phase 2 quickly started organizing activities at provincial level, as well as at medium level (the prefecture or city level, the next level down below provincial level), in order to see what could be achieved when all tiers of local government were engaged in efforts to prevent trafficking, starting at the community level (townships) and moving up to county level, prefecture level and finally provincial level. In addition to organizing further direct assistance activities in order to learn what forms of prevention are most effective in Yunnan, Phase 2 has also put a strong emphasis on building coordination between different branches of government at different levels, so that there is effective vertical and horizontal coordination. The experience of other parts of the world suggests that such coordination is vital if efforts to stop trafficking are to be effective.⁴⁸

At local level it is clear that the role of the Women's Federation has been crucial in providing the impetus to make the project work – providing the personnel and facilities to organize activities for local people, with a strong emphasis on women and girls. At higher levels the role of the Women's Federation is still important, but more coordination is required with a range of government departments. In both Simao City and Kunming (for Yunnan as a whole), it was apparent that this coordination has been achieved successfully and it appears likely to be sustained beyond the life of the project (due to the political commitment of the authorities to do so).

While workers' organizations have not placed a prominent role in the TICW project in Yunnan (although trade union officials are said to have participated in various of the project's steering committees), Phase 2 has involved an employers' organization (the Kunming City Private Economy Association) in a useful and prominent way, both increasing

⁴⁷ See: All-China Women's Federation and ILO-IPEC. Replication Meeting of Good Experiences to prevent trafficking in Children and Women in Yunnan Province of China: Records of Proceedings. 31 October – 1 November 2002. ILO, Bangkok, 2002.

⁴⁸ For example, in Central and Eastern Europe the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) has suggested that priority should be given to forming 'National Referral Mechanisms' in which all government agencies, inter-governmental organizations and non-governmental organizations involved in assisting individuals who have been trafficked or in initiatives to prevent trafficking should be represented. See OSCE/ODIHR (Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights), National Referral Mechanisms. Joining Efforts to Protect the Rights of Trafficked Persons. A Practical Handbook, 2004 (available on the OSCE website in English and Russian: <http://www.osce.org/odihr>).

its capacity to address trafficking issues and allowing it to try and influence individual employers.⁴⁹

6.2.3 Knowledge base

In the course of Phase 1, it became clear that while some members of minority groups in districts in southwest Yunnan were being trafficked to Myanmar and Thailand, relatively few migrants left these districts to travel to neighbouring countries, while most travelled to towns elsewhere in Yunnan or China. When cases of trafficking occurred, the vast majority involved rural-urban migration within China rather than cross-border trafficking.

At the outset of Phase 2, there was a lack of information about both rural-urban migration and employment in the informal sector. In order to obtain adequate information about rural-urban migration patterns and related information, in 2004 the Yunnan Provincial Statistics Bureau Analysis was asked to conduct a survey in the eight districts affected by the TICW project. The findings were published in 2005 in a 'Report of the Baseline Survey for the TICW Project Phase II in Yunnan Province'. This produced interesting data about rural-urban income differences and migration patterns and some information about abuses experienced by workers who had migrated elsewhere, either within Yunnan or elsewhere in China. The main abuses reported concerned long working hours and delays in paying wages (and deductions from wages which were due).

The report also contains some general information about cases of trafficking which was obtained from the police (Public Security) and other sources. It offered some preliminary analysis of causal factors in trafficking cases and an explanation of why some individuals are most likely to be trafficked than others. However, it is important to note that this analysis was not very detailed.

The Report of the Baseline Survey was a useful addition to the knowledge base about rural-urban migration in Yunnan. It would be useful to have further details concerning abuses experienced by migrants.

The evaluation team was concerned that the TICW project currently lacks adequate information about the types of exploitation and abuse experienced by internal migrants in Yunnan Province, notably children who may be involved in worst forms of child labour. The project's baseline information, collected in 2002, was based on research in rural areas, but not in towns where exploitation occurred, and focused on just two rural districts, both of which have distinct characteristics (a high proportion of the inhabitants belong to minorities, one of which, the Dai, had cultural and linguistic links to Thailand and have consequently tended to migrate to earn money in Thailand). The rapid assessment⁵⁰ published in 2002 observed that, "In Yunnan...on average over 1,000 children and women are trafficked annually... A distinctive feature of human trafficking in the two counties investigated is that most women and children are trafficked for forced marriage or adoption." However, it seemed that the statistic referring to 1,000 victims per annum was based on information

⁴⁹ See draft good practices paper prepared by the TICW project in Yunnan: Mobilize employers to participate into trafficking prevention extensively.

⁵⁰ Yunnan Province Women's Federation in collaboration with Yunnan Provincial Bureau of Statistics, Bureau of Statistics, Education Commission, and Justice Bureau of Jiangcheng and Menghai Counties. Yunnan Province, China. *Situation of Trafficking in Children and Women: A Rapid Assessment*. ILO, August 2002.

available from the police (Public Security), meaning that cases which the police had not categorized as trafficking were not counted.

It is possible that no children are being trafficked into urban areas or taken there to be subjected to worst forms of child labour, but the evaluation team was concerned that the evidence suggesting that there are few such cases, or none, is not dependable. For example, in Simao City the evaluator was told that 11 labour inspectors had been involved in July-August 2005 in inspections of work places involving 12,000 workers but had come across no cases of child labour. While the evaluation team had no reason to doubt the accuracy of this information, they were concerned that the methods used in investigations by law enforcement officials (Public Security or labour inspectors) might not be appropriate for identifying all the relevant cases.⁵¹

While the project is putting an excellent focus on adolescent girls and young women and has promoted inspections of work places by labour inspectors to check on child labour, it appears to have given less attention to the predicament of children outside conventional work places, such as children who are being exploited in the streets (either forced to beg or in other activities). The evaluation team was concerned that the information circulating in official circles about child labour might tend to confirm what is expected to be the situation—that no children are being subjected to economic exploitation. The team consequently recommends that the TICW project should conduct further research in urban areas within Yunnan, using objective methods, to establish whether children are involve in worst forms of child labour or not.

As much of the TICW's programme logic in Yunnan is based on the assumption that internal migrants are better off using government Labour Bureaux when seeking work elsewhere than depending on informal networks, there is also a need for more detailed information about migrant workers' experiences and the reasons why some opt for legal migration channels while others prefer informal channels. Some useful information could be collected within Yunnan Province, as an exclusively TICW activity, but much should be collected in other provinces where Yunnan migrants have gone to work. Some TICW Action Programmes are reported to be able to track information about individual migrants after they leave Yunnan Province. However, collaboration with the CP-TING project also appears vital in order to collect the information that is necessary in coastal provinces or other areas receiving substantial numbers of migrants. While it would be useful to collect further information through a general survey (along the lines of the one conducted by the Yunnan Provincial Statistics Bureau), more detailed qualitative information is also needed, based on in-depth interviews with migrants in which the respondent's anonymity is ensured and in which the interviewers are trained to use objective methods (i.e. do not suggest in their questions or tone that some methods of migration are more appropriate or legal than others, or that the respondent should express approval of official Labour Bureaux).

⁵¹ The evaluators also noted that it would be appropriate for all security personnel deployed in destination areas to be given some training in child protection standards and techniques, so that they know when children are being exploited in a way which is unacceptable under the law. In China, as in other countries, security personnel may not know what response is in the best interests of a child who is being exploited, for example, as part of a begging ring. In numerous countries security personnel ignore children who are begging in public places or ignore incidents when members of the public slap insistent child beggars because they do not know what response is appropriate and fear that preventing a child from begging may harm the child him or herself.

6.2.4 Advocacy and awareness raising

As activities to make young people aware of the risks of being trafficked have been organized as direct assistance programmes and integrated with other direct assistance programmes, they are described in the next sub-section.

The TICW project has evidently played a substantial role in translating information about human trafficking into Mandarin Chinese and disseminating this within Yunnan. For example, it reportedly arranged for 150,000 copies of the 'Handbook of Preventing Trafficking in Women and Children' to be printed and disseminated in 2005. At the same time, with the assistance of Kunming City Education Bureau, 100,000 copies of a 'Safe Employment Brochure', with texts developed by labour experts and illustrations by children, were reportedly printed and distributed. Together these represent a massive initiative to raise awareness about human trafficking. The evaluation team was unable to devote time to finding out what the impact of such large-scale dissemination had been but was able to confirm that large numbers of people in rural areas and of migrants now understand what abuses can be committed against migrants.

6.2.5 Direct assistance

While there has been a strong emphasis during Phase 2 to building the capacity of government at different levels to take effective action itself to stop trafficking, some direct assistance experiences started in rural areas in Phase 1 have continued and been spread to other countries and new direct assistance started in urban areas to provide support for migrants arriving there.

It is evident that the CP-TING project in five other provinces has benefited from the TICW's experience of direct assistance initiatives, both during Phase 1 and Phase 2. There is, however, a danger that these are regarded as 'definitive' in a rather premature way, when in fact there is a need, in Yunnan as well as elsewhere, to experiment with other direct assistance forms of prevention. This danger is exacerbated by the fact that the TICW Project does not envisage any new direct assistance activities being started during the remaining (second half) of Phase 2. In practice, the direct assistance initiatives of the TICW project in Yunnan have served as pilot projects to inform the ILO and the Chinese authorities, both in Yunnan and elsewhere in China, about the types of initiatives which can be effective in preventing trafficking. Furthermore, as the population of Yunnan Province contains a higher proportion of minorities than other parts of China, Yunnan has offered a unique opportunity to learn what measures can be taken within minority communities to prevent trafficking. With these two points in mind, the evaluation team considered that it would still be appropriate to initiate new types of preventive action at community level in Yunnan (i.e. direct assistance) in order to find out what is most effective in preventing emigrants being subjected to abuse.

6.2.5.1 Promoting alternative livelihoods in rural communities

The evaluator attempted to find out how effective micro-credit schemes had been in rural areas, talking to the beneficiaries of one scheme run by the TICW project during Phase 1 in a minority community (Gelanghe) and to individuals belonging to China's majority Han community in a township (Tong Xin) where they had access to micro-credit from a separate source, while Phase 2 of the TICW project has provided training to them about new techniques for commercial agriculture and animal husbandry.

In this and other cases the project's managers evidently intended the principle beneficiaries of direct assistance to be poor families in which they were one or more daughters, particularly households where parents would agree to keep their daughter(s) at school rather than allowing her to start work (or to migrate) while still of compulsory school age.

In both cases (not surprisingly) the beneficiaries felt that credit had been helpful, although several married couples in Tong Xin expressed the view that the training in new agricultural and husbandry techniques had contributed more to the increases in income they achieved subsequently than the credit.

In both cases it was difficult in the course of short interviews conducted in public to find out from the respondents whether the assistance they had received from the TICW project had helped reduce the likelihood that any members of the households concerned might decide to migrate in risky circumstances which could result in their being trafficked. There was no doubt that the assistance had helped the beneficiary households increase their income. However, the age of the adults concerned suggested that neither they nor their children fell into the age groups which are most vulnerable to being trafficked.⁵² Consequently the benefits of some of the assistance provided by TICW as a technique to prevent trafficking remained somewhat hypothetical: increases in the income of rural households probably have a long-term impact on both the beneficiary households and the wider community in which they live, which help reduce the likelihood that people will be trafficked. However, the impact is difficult to monitor and consequently remains a matter of conjecture rather than something about which evidence is available. In such circumstances, the project has not been able to prove that the promotion of alternative livelihoods can be targeted on individuals and households most vulnerable to being trafficked and that the technique (to prevent trafficking) deserves to be replicated elsewhere.

In Yunnan, as in other countries involved in the project, it would be useful to probe further into the impact of the project's micro-credit and income-generating activities, in order to explore the links (of cause and effect) between increases in income in various categories of household and the prevention of trafficking.

6.2.5.2 Encouraging adolescent girls from ethnic minorities to attend secondary school

In Menghai County a significant extra effort has been made to enable adolescent girls belonging to minority groups to attend lower secondary school. The efforts have been made in particular in areas where most girls attend primary school near to where they live for six years, but do not make the transition to secondary education to complete the further three years of schools which are nominally compulsory in Yunnan, as secondary schools are not located near enough to their homes for them to attend on a daily basis. The Spring Bud Programme in Menghai County's Minority Middle School provides financial support to cover the costs of girls attending middle school (with a target of supporting 800 girls). Both students and teachers told the evaluation team that the participatory methods being used were bringing substantial benefits which went beyond the narrow field of information about child labour and child rights.

⁵² The evaluation team was told in one village by adult women belonging to a credit union that it would be too risky to loan money to unmarried girls and young women, as they were unlikely to use it in a responsible way (even though it was the 15 to 25 age group of young women who were known to be most vulnerable to being trafficked).

The Spring Bud Programme brings several different benefits: it enables adolescent girls to attend school and to avoid starting work (either near to or far from home) or contracting an early marriage; it teaches girls (and also boys at the same school) about gender equality; and it has introduced novel teaching techniques which are reported to have brought wider benefits. One student participating in the programme told the evaluator:

“I have several (girl) friends in my village who started work after leaving primary school and know that one has left the village to work elsewhere, but I don’t know what has happened to her.”

This programme is undoubtedly having a strong impact on the girls concerned. However, it is important not to assume that the intended benefits will materialise without any extra complications. Evidence collected in northern Thailand concerning adolescent girls belonging to (related) minorities who have benefited from similar schemes to enable them to attend secondary school suggests that they may have unexpected results and even increase the likelihood that such girls are trafficked.⁵³ It would consequently be appropriate to monitor what happens to a representative sample of the beneficiaries for at least two years after they leave school. This would make it possible to ensure that the TICW project does not have unintended harmful side effects on the very girls it is intended to benefit.

6.2.5.3 Encouraging children and young people to be aware of the risk of being trafficked

The evaluator heard about a variety of initiatives to make children and young women aware of the risks of being trafficked or abused if they migrate to cities, as well as information sessions being given to young women and girls once they arrived in cities. He was encouraged to hear of the use of participatory methods (in the course of awareness trainings, as well as in the Spring Bud programme), which children who had participated said they had enjoyed and which had produced interesting pictures for the evaluator and others to see.

The project has developed an interesting technique for informing young women living in rural areas about their prospects if they migrate to town: ‘study tours’ which involve taking a group of adolescent girls to Kunming (or another city) in order to see what life is like and meet other migrants, including ones who have become employers. This seemed a relatively expensive technique, but one which both beneficiaries and partner organizations were keen to see replicated. The evaluation team were told that a tracer study had followed up 60 girls who had visited Kunming to find out what jobs they acquired and to try and assess how they had been influenced by the study tour.⁵⁴ Although the information that was acquired did not indicate clearly what the impact of the study visit had been, the mere fact that there had been an effort to assess it was laudable. If the overall assessment of this initiative by project staff is positive, it would be appropriate to involve a larger enough number of adolescents and assess its impact in even more detail in order to draw firm conclusions about it would be appropriate to replicate elsewhere. The technique would presumably not be replicable in situations of cross-border migration and trafficking, nor in situations where the distance to the nearest potential destination or cost of travelling there is great.

⁵³ See Lisa Rende Taylor, *Dangerous Trade-offs. The Behavioral Ecology of Child Labor and Prostitution in Rural Northern Thailand*, *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 46, No. 3, June 2005.

⁵⁴ The evaluation team was told that this follow-up information was based on CHN/AP/003-Holistic Plan to Prevent Trafficking in Simao City and a technical report dated 24/03/2005-24/11/2005.

It was evident that some rural people who had been given information about the risks to migrants of being trafficked or abused viewed their attendance at an ‘awareness raising session’ as a cost which it was necessary to pay in order to get access to another benefit offered by the TICW project (training in agricultural techniques), rather than a benefit. The evaluation team had no evidence that this did any harm, but felt it revealed a fundamental contradiction within the project: activities to promote income-generating activities in rural areas have tended to be aimed at people who would like to remain living at home (and who do not require much convincing that migrating to cities is undesirable) rather than individuals who are in a more marginal situation and are close to making a choice between emigration and investing in a new income-generating activity at home.

The evaluators also saw a TICW video demonstrating how rural migrants arriving at Kunming railway station are contacted and given information to help them avoid them being taken in by dishonest employment agents. This sounded like an effective way of transmitting information directly to young migrants who were at relatively high risk of abuse. However, the evaluator visiting Kunming did not have an opportunity to investigate this technique.

6.2.5.4 Making employers and others aware of trafficking in order to reduce demand for trafficked labour

The Kunming City Private Economy Association has provided information to employers in the city in order to demonstrate to them how they can contribute to preventing trafficking. While many of the employers who have been contacted are reported to remain cynical and uninterested, the project manager felt that many employers had stopped viewing trafficking exclusively as an issue of ‘selling people’ for the police to deal with. It was, however, not possible for the evaluator to establish whether it had been possible for the employers’ organization to measure the impact of their awareness raising initiatives. The evaluation team noted in this case (as in numerous others) that the Action Programme had adequate ‘output indicators’, but not adequate ‘results indicators’ for measuring what changes have been brought about by their activities.⁵⁵

An employer involved in the garment making sector told the evaluator that she felt very motivated by the project felt that she and others should not recruit girls below the age of 18 as employees. However, it was not possible to gauge how typical her reaction was.

6.2.5.5 Providing support for ‘Women’s Homes’ (social centres for women and girls)

The TICW project has provided support for the establishment of ‘women’s homes’ in both rural townships and cities. They perform different functions in each, but in both cases are intended to help prevent trafficking.

In rural townships they are social centres which are principally but not exclusively for women and girls: they have been used for activities providing training and information

⁵⁵ An indicator is a quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple and reliable means to measure achievement, to reflect the changes connected to an intervention, or to help assess the performance of a development actor. One set of ‘output indicators’ help measure whether the project is on schedule, producing the specific results which are expected from its activities. Separate ‘results indicators’ measure what changes have actually been brought about by the programme’s activities. ILO-IPEC does not formally distinguish between these two categories. By not making the distinction, however, the organization may indirectly discourage as much interest as would be appropriate in the measurement of progress towards the results its projects are expected to achieve.

(involving boys and men as well as girls and women B).⁵⁶ By organizing entertainment and other activities, they aim to provide girls and young women with something interesting in their own community that might act as a disincentive to migrating.⁵⁷ Without the ILO's support, townships apparently have women's federation offices, but ones which cannot supply electricity and television and do not have the other facilities which have been useful when organizing awareness raising activities and training sessions. Such social centres have the potential to bring benefits which are much wider than preventing trafficking.

In Kunming, the 'Women's Home' in Kunming's Sanheyang district serves as a drop-in centre for migrant women and girls. The link (in terms of 'programme logic') between the existence of these drop-in centres and the prevention of a range of abuses to which girls and young women might be subjected on arrival in a city with which they are unfamiliar seems clear: they provide a protective role to similar residential or drop-in facilities established in cities around the world, whose effectiveness is well known. The young women using the drop-in centre spoke highly of its usefulness. One had attended both an information session about trafficking and human rights in the centre and received skills training which enabled her to get promotion in her work place (where she was employed as a waitress). Another explained how the information session about trafficking had enabled her to warn a friend who had been offered far more wages if she agreed to go and work in another province that she might be in danger. Her friend had desisted, while another had apparently become involved in prostitution after agreeing to depart. It appeared that the training sessions enabled young women to assert their rights in the work place and, without further support, to end abuses such as systematic late payment of wages. This is evidently made possible by the strong policy positions taken recently by the authorities in Yunnan and other provinces against abuses committed against migrants.

6.2.6 The knock-on effects of the TICW project in China

Information available about the CP-TING project from a variety of sources confirmed that the CP-TING's activities in other provinces of China have benefited enormously from the experience and expertise of the TICW project in Yunnan. In addition to the initial replication meeting held in 2002 and the key role played during 2003 by a (then) member of the TICW staff in designing the CP-TING project, the TICW project coordinator in Yunnan has continued to feed expert advice into the CP-TING project which is reported to be extremely valuable (for example, at a round table on education and child labour organized in Beijing in November 2005, where the TICW project coordinator in Yunnan made a presentation about the project's education-related activities in Yunnan). This is a huge benefit and one which it is important not to jeopardise. At the same time, it also carries some risks: firstly, that the TICW project coordinator is unable to devote sufficient attention to developing new and imaginative activities in Yunnan; secondly, that the TICW project in Yunnan comes under

⁵⁶ The draft of a paper on good practice describes Women's Homes in the following terms: "At Women's Homes, villagers can attend training; read books; watch training VDOs about agriculture and animal husbandry; carry out cultural and entertaining activities, chat. Those who want to migrate can also watch the promotional VDO produced under the collaboration of Yunnan Provincial Employment Center and ILO TICW project, obtain employment information and watch the VDO about outcomes of phase I".

⁵⁷ The 'programme logic' here includes the assumption that boredom is a major reason for young people to migrate, particularly girls. While it is clearly a significant factor, cultural practices (such as virilocal marriage) and the status of women in general are also evidently factors which require tackling. In the long-run, it seems possible that the establishment of a social centre run for and by women may enable them to combat cultural practices which discriminate against girls and women.

such great pressure to generate activities which can be replicated elsewhere in China that it passes on practices which have either not been adequately tested or which are unlikely to produce the results that others would like. In effect, Yunnan is expected to produce a ‘magic bullet’, but it is no more capable of doing so than anyone else.

The remedial action is not obvious. It certainly should not entail reducing the role of the TICW staff in Yunnan in advising or passing on information to the CP-TING project. However, TICW project managers should examine ways of maintaining the capacity of the project’s management in Yunnan. It is important that the various methods and practices which are tried out in Yunnan are measured against a suitably high ‘quality assurance’ standard before attempts are made to replicate them elsewhere in China.

6.2.7 Sustainability of the TICW project in China

It is clear that government efforts to prevent blind migration in China will be sustained after the TICW project comes to an end and that the Government (both at provincial level in Yunnan and at national level) is committed to maintaining the institutions created with the support of the project at provincial, prefectural and county level.

Because the TICW project has worked closely with the ACWF, it seems likely that the emphasis on gender equality advocated by the TICW project will also be sustained.

However, once the TICW project comes to an end, it is likely that the issues on which the project is working on will be perceived uniquely in the terms which the Government uses: ‘safe migration’ will be equated with ‘official channels for migration’ and less attention is likely to be given to checking whether it is inevitably in the best interests of migrants to find new jobs via official channels, rather than using informal networks but doing so once they are better informed about possible risks and aware of where to seek help if they run into difficulties. During the remaining period of the TICW project, it is consequently important that evidence should be collected from children, young women and young men who have left home to find work elsewhere, either within Yunnan or in other provinces, to find out what forms of support (from either official or informal sources) they found helpful and whether there are aspects of the official channels which they found harmful. TICW should use this evidence to ensure that government policies on migration reflect the needs and best interests of migrants as closely as possible.

6.3 Lao PDR

6.3.1 Summary

The Village Development Funds are proving popular and beneficial and appear, at this early stage of implementation, to be having some promising effects. The government demonstrates a strong commitment to the project and is keen to sustain work on this issue once TICW leaves. Awareness raising at community level is the Achilles heel of the project, and at least in sites visited by the evaluator, knowledge and skills relating to trafficking issues seemed weak.

6.3.2 Direct assistance

The Village Development Funds (VDF), a mainstay of the direct assistance activities in Lao PDR, are proving popular and beneficial. The VDF have been revamped in Phase 2 of the

project, taking over from an earlier revolving fund model. Modifications include a savings component (so that the fund is not 100 per cent financed by the project) which gives greater ownership and management responsibility to village committees and also creates opportunity for the capital base to expand. The fund is now also better supported by technical assistance, training and accounting systems. The ILO microfinance specialist from Bangkok was closely involved in the redesign and was able to build on learning from other ILO experiences which show that the viability of microfinance initiatives depends on local traditions and the availability of a suitable local organization capable of supervision and management. The project is implemented in Lao PDR by Lao Sustainable Community Development (LSCDPA), just such an organization, with long-standing expertise and much sought after by donors.

The VDF are viewed very positively by the Government of the Lao PDR which sees them as allied to both the trafficking and wider poverty reduction strategies. Success of the funds can thus far be seen by increasing capital and membership. For example, in Nyankhan village in Savannakhet, funding has increased to 35 million kips in just three months (with only 10 million coming from TICW). Repayments and the capital base will need to be monitored in coming months to see if the new model is working well.

Villagers view the fund very positively and any initial reservations about the new structure seem to be disappearing. They appreciate being able to borrow money to start businesses at reasonable rates (market rates of interest are 20-30 per cent per month as compared to VDF which is 2-5 per cent per month), value learning new skills (e.g. how to manage money) and comment that the VDF had helped to improve community relations in some cases. The villagers talked about the VDF with a sense of pride and accomplishment.

6.3.2.1 Impact of the VDF

The funds have not been in operation for long, so changes in terms of impact are still limited. Some reported better access to medical care, food, and clothing as a result of rising income levels. Others reported that they were able to send their children to school on a more regular basis. Villages receiving credit during Phase 1 had used the money for community improvement schemes such as building schools and toilets. One district official said that in one district alone, the number of poor families had been reduced from 1,500 to 500, although no details were available to support this.

While most effects seem positive, the project needs to monitor for any adverse consequences and possible contraventions of ILO conventions 138 and 182. On a visit to Houay Laoh village, the evaluator heard that the VDF are generating more work for family members (including children as young as seven) and that much of the new work was in brick-making. Work in brick kilns is recognized as a hazardous form of child labour by ILO/IPEC and a known problem in the region and in Lao PDR.

The impact of the VDF on trafficking seems more tangential. Although all were agreed in theory that developing the economic base of villages and providing local job opportunities should lead to a reduction of numbers leaving in unsafe circumstances, there was no hard data to support this link. Both ILO and LSCDPA staff were able to cite concrete cases where the VDF had assisted returning migrants to reintegrate in their home community by giving loans (without deposits) and enabling them to start up small businesses. The project has served to prevent re-migration but there are very few cases reported of people who had decided not to leave in the first place because of VDF. Indeed, on the contrary, there is clear

evidence that the VDF has enabled some people to leave and send money back for deposit in the VDF. Government officials on numerous occasions mentioned that data was available showing that the numbers of emigrants were declining though it was not clear to whom these numbers referred (i.e. trafficking victims, legal migrants, illegal migrants, etc). The data viewed by the evaluator seemed inconclusive and in some cases seemed to show numbers of Lao migrants to Thailand on the rise. Anecdotal information supports the case that less young people/children are migrating and thereby exposing themselves to risk. For example, in Houa Elouang village in Savannakhet, less young people are said to be leaving. In Houay Laoh village, villagers reported that more young people used to leave before the VDF started but that many were now coming back due to job creation in the brick kilns: 300 young people aged 14 to 30 had left before 2001 and 21 had left since the end of 2001. In Bun Kha village, the evaluator met a large group of children and young people and the villagers remarked that there would never have been so many children and young people present at similar meetings in the past, as they would all have left for Thailand. Villagers said there were 200 people in Thailand at present; 22 of these were under 18, and they had not heard back from four of them.

It is also impossible to distinguish the effect of other parallel measures, such as:

- the growth of legal migration: in Bun Kha village, villagers said that more people are now going to Thailand with work permits;
- police crackdowns on traffickers: district officials in Sanasomboun district said that 49 agents had been arrested and imprisoned in the past year alone.

Migration also tends to fluctuate, being seasonal and linked the farming cycles. Furthermore, returnees have come back with their own stories of hardship and this has had a discouraging effect. For example, in Houay Laoh village, three women had returned with stories of little pay, or no pay, and being kept imprisoned in factories in Thailand, which had put others off and led them to feel that life in Lao PDR was better.

Generally, the links between VDF and the prevention of trafficking are tenuous and possibly a sterile line of inquiry. The *raison d'être* of this intervention is not to stop migration but to give people options so that they are not forced to migrate in circumstances of despair. A more subtle analysis which looks at the wider socio-economic impacts of the VDF, how it has changed the behaviour of beneficiaries and their life opportunities, whether increased economic prosperity is enabling people to leave in more safe circumstances (e.g. with more money in their pockets to tide them over) etc, would be a suitable and meaningful undertaking for the project before it winds up.

Although the funds appear to be having a promising effect, there is a question as to whether they benefit those most at risk of being trafficked. The borrowers are mainly heads of families or housewives, not the children and young women most likely to leave. These benefit more indirectly, i.e. through the general uplifting of their family circumstances, or opportunities to find work with those who have used the funds to start up businesses. In some places, parents have set up savings accounts for children - one example of a direct benefit. In other places, special regulations are being drafted to enable poor families to access the funds without a deposit.

The question then arises as to whether the funds could be better targeted. In some ways the VDFs work because they are broad-based and relevant to a cross-section of the community. To aim them at a narrower group would undermine the wider community interest needed for effective management and sustainability. Some also feel there may be cultural barriers in targeting the funds towards young people as, in traditional Lao society, young people are not

seen as independent actors. Indeed, reports suggest that young people are reluctant to take out loans as they do not have business experience and fear being unable to make repayments. There may only be few young people seeking access such funds; indeed, the evaluator only met one such person (a young man in Bun Kha village who wanted money to set up a bicycle repair business). However, more could be done to enable better access to risk groups without undermining the overall structure of the VDF.

The funds in some places are accompanied by vocational training activities, some of which are funded by TICW and some by ILO WEDGE (Women's Entrepreneurship Development and Gender Equality) SEED Fund, and some may also be funded by the Government from other sources. These initiatives have also led to economic benefits in some cases. For example, training on paddy rice farming has resulted in greater yields. Currently, most beneficiaries of these schemes seem to be older people and the training provided—pig-rearing, paddy rice cultivation etc. —holds little attraction for the target age bracket. Bun Kha villagers said that most of the beneficiaries were aged 25-40. Although there is little room for manoeuvre in terms of targeting the VDF, the vocational training activities could be more easily targeted to 'at risk' groups. There seems to be an acute gap in knowledge as to the needs and interests of children and young people: an assessment and a market analysis is required to see what kinds of new vocational training activities can be designed that would be of interest to young people, such as carpentry, bike repair and hairdressing.

It was difficult to get a clear picture of how the VDF fit into other microfinance initiatives in Lao PDR. Clearly there are a number of organizations working on this and the government itself has a poverty reduction fund supported by the World Bank which has similar funds. Most other donors see microfinance as an end in itself rather than as a means of achieving a wider objective. Some organizations have visited the VDF but it is not known if they replicated the model. More information exchange and sharing between organizations working on micro-finance in Lao PDR would be beneficial.

6.3.3 Capacity building

The project is being implemented through government partners. The project works through the central level ministry rather than instructing implementing staff directly. It is supervised by a national steering committee for the project which falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour and comprises 11 members from various governmental departments, (labour, social affairs, women's affairs, youth, police, education, foreign affairs). This committee was updated in Phase 2 of the project with new members and has met three times so far to approve work plans, action programmes, endorse extensions, etc. There are also provincial steering committees in the areas where the project is working which include the chief of the district and village heads. There is a separate steering committee on trafficking as a whole, chaired by the deputy prime minister, which concentrates on criminal justice, the COMMIT process, etc. The project does not have direct access to this committee but its government counterparts sit on both committees. There are various other committees on related issues but government officials feel the demarcations are clear and there is no duplication. Indeed the government seems wary of this and has resisted calls for the establishment of a committee on Convention 182 on the grounds that they think this may lead to overlaps and confusion.

The strong commitment of the government of Lao PDR to this project can be in little doubt. All levels of government, from central through to the provinces and districts, were mobilized to meet the evaluator and spoke highly of the project and its importance to them. The project

falls in line with trafficking being a key priority. There seems to be an increasing recognition that migration and trafficking is almost a national threat for a country with such a small population: with a population of only 5.9 million, about half a million are already abroad.

Capacity building of government officials on project management has been one of the main achievements of the project and resulted in increased knowledge, management skills and report writing abilities. Capacity building seems to have improved in this phase and was said to be weaker in Phase 1 of the project, with district staff unable to resolve problems immediately, and having a limited capacity to plan and report.

Nonetheless there is general consensus that more capacity building of government is needed before the project is phased out in order to ensure that it is left in good order when TICW leaves. On VDFs, there is a need for more advice on technical issues such as handling members who are unable to pay interest or make deposits on time, handling seasonal variations etc. Officials from Savannakhet sought specific technical advice on an imminent problem: what to do when the fund exceeds the demand, as this will make it difficult to pay dividends. There is a need for more intensive training of village committees, especially as most members lack schooling and training needs to start from basics. TICW's phasing out of direct assistance at this time seems premature given that the VDF are promising but not yet proven and that both government officials and village committees require capacity development before taking over the reins.

Government counterparts confirmed that TICW had enabled them to work on the trafficking issue, giving them the technical assistance and funding needed to do something in practice. Examples of technical assistance which are said to have been of particular help include assistance with developing proposals, sharing experiences from other countries (e.g. a visit to Thailand where a Lao delegation learnt about structuring a project from the central to the grassroots level), and also helping workers find jobs and develop their skills. For the Labour Ministry, ILO is the main international counterpart on trafficking.

Relations with the Government seem to be working well, with the project shortly due to take up residence in government buildings. Relations seem to have improved with the arrival of the new national programme manager, as there had been some complaints that enough information was not being shared by the project previously. There is a more conscious drive on the part of the project to engender ownership in government, to allow the government to take the lead with the project playing a background supporting role. Central government officials also felt that close supervision and monitoring from TICW's sub-regional level had also been very important.

Aside from requests for more funding, greater coverage and longer-term support, partners called for more opportunities to exchange learning within Lao PDR, the sub-region and beyond. Some felt the project needed to make better links with other parts of government, e.g. economic development, education, tourism, as collaboration currently seemed too narrow. It was also felt the project could play a helpful role in improving coordination within government. Assistance from the ILO on other labour management issues was also requested: revision of labour law to meet international standards and help with implementation of conventions 182 and 138; help with developing health and safety policy; help with gathering labour data; and a survey of the skilled/unskilled workforce.

6.3.4 Knowledge base

The Lao PDR Preliminary assessment of illegal labour migration and trafficking in children and women for labour exploitation concluded in January 2003, still in the first phase, was praised by partners at sub-regional level and seems to have been widely read.

6.3.5 Advocacy and awareness raising

Awareness raising seems to be the Achilles heel of the project in Lao PDR. While many efforts have been taken to address the economic root causes of trafficking through the VDF, issues about knowledge and life skills which make children and young people vulnerable to exploitation, have almost entirely been neglected. Government officials themselves spoke on various occasions about the need to tackle the issue from two angles: to change knowledge and attitudes and to implement VDF to give people the economic possibility of remaining where they are. This appears not to have been achieved and what emerges is a lopsided approach.

Central government officials tended to talk about the awareness raising aspect in positive terms saying that this was being very well implemented by youth and women's groups. One external agency in Lao PDR also complimented TICW's awareness raising work using peer educators and culturally relevant messages. A 2005 good practices publication by the project highlights the youth awareness raising work that was done. However, none of this was borne out by the evaluator's visits to project sites and it is not known what the respondents who praised the awareness-raising work were referring to: whether they are referring to work in areas not visited by the evaluator; work in the earlier phase of the TICW project, or the work of another organization entirely.

The evaluator found awareness raising to be weak and key informants involved with the project, when cross-questioned on this, agreed it to be the case. Awareness raising activities in both phases have been related to one off events, e.g. celebrating children's days. A youth group conducted role plays in some villages in Phase 1 of the project, though this only seems to have happened once or twice in the life of the project. For example, Houay Laoh village said there had been three role play performances since the project started. In addition, in some locations, IEC materials, posters, CDs, booklets have been distributed.

Officials from LSCDPA and provincial/district government appear to be diligently integrating this issue into their visits, bringing up issues of trafficking when they monitor the VDF. What is missing is a good solid community-based awareness raising programme⁵⁸ which mobilizes peer educators and community members on a regular basis and which not only passes information on trafficking issues but also builds the skills and confidence of children and young people to cope with difficult situations.⁵⁹ This should be closely coordinated with the VDF programme, but almost certainly organized separately. It was noticeable to the evaluation team that of all the children and young people met in three countries during the evaluation, the focus group in Lao PDR was the most diffident of all,

⁵⁸ Evidently, such activities are not normally defined as 'advocacy' from the point of view of the project objectives, but they are discussed here for want of a better place to put them.

⁵⁹ The evaluation team was told about an AP supported by the TICW project which is aiming to conduct awareness raising activities. This Lao Women's Union AP is entitled "Training of Trainers and Advocates to Combat Trafficking in Children and Women" and reportedly involves establishing mobile advocacy teams at provincial and district levels to conduct awareness raising activities at the village level. However, the teams' impact was not perceptible at the time of the evaluation team's visit.

unable to say what dangers they would face or how they would protect themselves, clearly highlighting a need to do more for this vulnerable target group.

Villagers themselves called for more awareness raising activities (without any prompting from the evaluator). Implementing partners agreed that awareness raising needs to be more community based and to run in tandem with VDF. While existing materials were useful, it was important to supplement their use with peer educators and possibly even victims of trafficking themselves to counteract myths surrounding life abroad. Overall, it seems the project has not allocated a sufficient budget for this type of activity.

Without awareness raising on trafficking/unsafe migration, it is unclear how the project activities are differentiated at village level from general poverty reduction work which also includes Village Funds. It is indeed a pity that the project seems to be nearing conclusion without tackling this aspect. However, in line with its objective of creating demonstration projects to show how this issue can be tackled, it seems incumbent on the project to stimulate some such activities before its life is over. If TICW is unable to find the funds itself, it should consider encouraging other agencies working on community-based awareness raising activities, such as Save the Children UK, to come and work in the project sites where it has VDF, in order to demonstrate the value of a two-pronged approach.

By contrast, gaps in mass media have been recognized by the project and one positive initiative has been the mini media programme, initiated by the Communications Officer in Bangkok. This aims to train journalists and to stimulate interest among other donors so that further mass media activities can be started in due course. This is widely regarded as a very good effort and a daring enterprise in a country that has traditionally had a closed press and limited press freedom. The Government expressed its interest in mass media campaigns, especially radio (as it has the greatest outreach) and the project has been able to interest other agencies, some of whom have already been able to commit funds (UNIAP and Asian Regional Cooperation to Prevent People Trafficking - ARCPPT). It is too early to say whether the media workshop has had an impact on reporting. Mass media is an important angle to pursue but needs to be complimented by grassroots awareness raising work.

6.3.6 Sustainability

The VDF are likely to be sustained in Lao PDR. Government at both central and provincial level is preparing for the phase out of the TICW project itself and seems willing to deploy some funds to ensure their continuation. The government also seems to be actively considering how to involve other donors in supporting the VDFs. There are some inbuilt mechanisms in the VDF structure which lend themselves to sustainability as well as expansion to other areas: a small percentage of the interest (1 per cent) is set aside for support and monitoring from LSCDPA and the government; the government is also able to recycle its share and invest it in new villages. Although the government has vision for continuation, TICW should continue to provide support and capacity building and starting withdrawal already seems very premature and possibly detrimental to the long-term sustainability of this initiative (though it seems that the government are in agreement with the withdrawal).

6.4 Thailand

6.4.1 Summary

The activities under Phase 2 fall into two distinct parts in Thailand: activities in Northern Thailand which focus on three provinces that are primarily sending areas (from which migrants have been trafficked either to Japan or elsewhere within Thailand); and activities in Central Thailand, in and around Bangkok and further west, where migrants from neighbouring countries (the majority of whom are from Myanmar) are exploited.

Although the Government is now aware of trafficking and exploitation of foreigners from neighbouring countries, its core responses are still limited to protection, recovery and repatriation of victims and to a lesser extent, the prosecution of traffickers and other criminals involved in the process of trafficking. Prevention work is still centered on vulnerable Thais and Thai non-citizen hill-tribe residents. The ILO is in a good position to provide technical services to promote preventive measures for foreign migrants, for which the TICW country project needs more systematic expertise, support and training, along with coherent planning on advocacy and consultation with strategic partners in doing so.

Both evaluators visited Chiang Rai and Phayao provinces in the north and also the fishing port of Samut Sakhon near Bangkok. One of them looked at the documentation concerning initiatives to stop child begging in Bangkok and met the Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Labour and some of his staff.

Phayao Province provided the evaluators with evidence of what capacity building can achieve in an almost ideal situation—a model for excellence (see 6.4.2.1 below for details). In contrast, the project's activities in destination areas in Thailand were less advanced than the evaluators had expected. Because Phase 1 did not address destination areas, in Thailand it did not take on the difficult transition process of shifting the Government's concern about trafficking from a focus on the trafficking of Thais (and Thai non-citizens resident in northern Thailand) to the trafficking and exploitation in Thailand of foreigners from neighbouring countries. This transition has evidently been a difficult one to accomplish, both for staff of the TICW project and for other institutions in Thailand which are concerned about trafficking (such as the National Committee on Combating Trafficking in Children and Women). Although it was bound to take some time to convince the authorities at both national level and in Central Thailand of the legitimacy of the ILO's concerns about the ill-treatment of migrant workers in Thailand and the reasons for tackling this within the framework of a project to prevent trafficking, the slow progress nevertheless poses a challenge for the entire TICW project. Phase 2 activities are also addressing exploitation and demand in locations in Cambodia, China and Viet Nam (in Sihanoukville, Kunming and Ho Chi Minh City respectively). However, in each case these are relatively small-scale, so the evaluators were left with the impression that, as far as destination areas and the issue of demand are concerned, the project has dabbled at the fringes but shied away from tackling the central and most challenging problems.

In Cambodia, China and Viet Nam, the focus in destinations is on internal migrants who are being exploited and who require protection, i.e. citizens of the same country, who may face discrimination on account of their rural origins, but who, because they are not foreigners, do not face harsher forms of xenophobia and racism. In Thailand the victims of exploitation about whom the TICW project is concerned are exclusively of foreign origin. There are special challenges to ensuring that protection measures available to nationals (both labour

protection and child protection) are also available to foreigners. The situation has been eased considerably by recent decisions of the Government of Thailand to recognize that Thailand needs migrant workers and to regularize the immigration status of many migrants.⁶⁰ However, the TICW project has experienced some difficulties in working out what issues and groups of migrants it should focus on and in persuading others to share its view that migrant workers are not just vulnerable to abuse but also being subjected to trafficking and the exploitation associated with trafficking.

6.4.2 Capacity building

There have been important developments affecting the project and the issue of trafficking since it started in 2003. These include the adoption in 2004 of a national agenda on trafficking in persons under the terms of which provinces have agreed to take specific actions to stop trafficking. Nine northern provinces signed a collective MoU as a result and the TICW project has linked its Phase 2 work in northern Thailand with three of these provinces. They also include two MoUs on cooperation in the employment of (migrant) workers and efforts to combat trafficking in persons, signed with Cambodia in May 2003 and an MoU with Lao PDR on efforts to combat trafficking in persons signed in July 2005 (supplementing an existing one on employment of workers signed in 2002). The ILO reportedly played a key role in facilitating these MoUs concerning employment, but was less involved in the ones about trafficking..

At the national level the ILO and TICW project have good working relations with part of the Ministry of Labour dealing with labour protection, which understands and appears to support the TICW project's objectives. However, the ministry reported having no ways of monitoring abuses of migrant workers by employers apart from responding to information provided to it by NGOs. Furthermore, ensuring coherence and consistency among all government ministries and agencies is evidently a huge challenge, both for the ministry and for the TICW project, in particular as the presence of a large migrant population in Thailand is considered first and foremost to be an issue of national security. One consequence of this has been that the security forces have continued to detain migrant children who have recently been allowed to attend schools in Thailand. Following pressure from child rights defenders, the Ministry of Education agreed that the children of unregistered (i.e. irregular) migrants could attend school.

Within the Government of Thailand, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security has the lead role on the issue of human trafficking. The Ministry's Bureau of Child Welfare Promotion and Protection functions as the secretariat to the National Committee on Combating Trafficking in Children and Women. This Committee is a coordinating body among various concerned agencies and national experts. The Government is reported to intend to dissolve the committee soon and integrate its activities into a new National Commission on Anti-Human Trafficking. However, neither the Ministry's Bureau nor the National Committee is reported to have enough influence to ensure that the security forces or other ministries observe a common policy with respect to migrants. With the appointment of a new Prime Minister and formation of a new cabinet due in mid-2006, however, the TICW project could take advantage of this and work with other organizations to persuade the Prime

⁶⁰ Assessed by Professor Vitit Muntarbhorn in the TICW publication, *Employment and Protection of Migrant Workers in Thailand: National Laws/Practices versus International Labour Standards?* 2005. This has the admirable strength of containing an unofficial translation in Thai, rather than being exclusively in English.

Minister to take action to promote better coordination at national level and to ensure coherence in the activities of different government ministries and agencies.

The existence of a plethora of government institutions with nominal and actual responsibility for action in relation to human trafficking is normal in many countries which are destinations for traffickers and their victims and makes it difficult to organize effective action of any sort to prevent trafficking or to protect and assist victims. In some regions of the world governments have responded to this challenge and established good coordination mechanisms (such as ‘National Referral Mechanisms’ in parts of Europe, referred to in 6.2.2). It is not clear that the National Committee on Combating Trafficking in Children and Women plays this role in Thailand or that there is any other adequate coordination mechanism. In this situation the ILO and TICW evidently have difficulty in ensuring their anti-trafficking activities are well coordinated with others and might benefit from working more intensively with other organizations to develop an adequate mechanism for coordination at national level. This would evidently require a change from TICW’s strategy up until now, which has put more emphasis on building good relations and capacity at provincial level.

During Phase 2 the project has established good working relations with the Chair of the National Committee on Combating Trafficking in Children and Women, with whom TICW’s relations were reportedly poor during Phase 1. She is an important ‘driver of change’ as far as initiatives concerning human trafficking and child rights are concerned in Thailand. Evidently, as an expert in her own field, she does not always agree with the initiatives taken by the TICW project and has her own views about which strategies are appropriate. This is frequently the case with ‘drivers of change’. Her involvement has had the useful benefit of building links between the TICW project’s activities and those of the National Committee on Combating Trafficking in Children and Women.

6.4.2.1 Phayao Province and two other provinces in northern Thailand

At provincial level, taking advantage of the MoU signed by nine provincial governments in northern Thailand has enabled the TICW project to help build the capacity of these governments to respond to trafficking. The MoU stipulated that each province should establish an “Operation Centre”, in effect a form of referral mechanism to coordinate efforts to prevent trafficking and to provide assistance to victims of trafficking. The greatest achievements are evident in Phayao Province, which decided on its own initiative to establish anti-trafficking committees within each district of the province and not only at provincial level, as required by the MoU. The commitment of the provincial government is demonstrated by the relatively high proportion of the province’s budget for anti-trafficking activities which reportedly comes from its own budget (77 per cent, with the central government contributing 14 per cent and the ILO contributing 9 per cent). The province also has other strong points which the ILO could try and promote elsewhere: officials in charge of efforts to prevent trafficking are relatively experienced (whereas in some other provinces they are reported to be inexperienced new graduates) and the ILO’s efforts have received strong support from officials at the top of the provincial government. These and other factors which facilitated success are important for the ILO to recognize, but difficult for it to deliberately replicate. For example, it appears largely fortuitous that the TICW project’s initial activities in 2001, when it carried out a rapid assessment and convened a stakeholders’ meeting, opened the eyes of some provincial officials to the external dimensions (outside the province) of poverty and exploitation issues they were concerned about within the province.

At the same time, those running the TICW project clearly recognized a good opportunity and took maximum advantage of it.

The head of social development and human security in Phayao Province commented that the impact of efforts to prevent trafficking could be noted by observing changes in the techniques used by traffickers, who he knew were trying out new methods (such as fake marriages and taking groups of young people on outings). He and others told the evaluators that the ILO's influence and advice had been extremely valuable.

On the face of it, this looks like an experience to replicate elsewhere. However, in practice the situation in Phayao is probably too unique to seek to replicate elsewhere in Thailand. For several decades large numbers of women and girls have emigrated from the province, many of them earning money from commercial sex subsequently, including a significant number who were trafficked to Japan. Investing heavily in efforts to prevent trafficking, including coordination at provincial and district level, has been one way of trying to put an end to the province's reputation as a place to recruit prostitutes. However, provinces which do not perceive that they have the same stigma are unlikely to be willing to make the same investment in building their capacity to prevent trafficking. Indeed, perhaps Phase 2 already has evidence that this is so, for the authorities in Chiang Mai province have accorded much less priority to developing their capacity to prevent trafficking (but is also a larger and richer province, making it harder for TICW to work and influence the authorities there).

Nevertheless, the experience in Phayao may be useful to replicate in other specific sites around the world which wish to reduce the numbers of women and girls emigrating to earn money from commercial sex, some of which are also affected by ILO initiatives (such as the Benin City area of Nigeria in West Africa).

In northern Thailand, advocacy techniques appear to be needed to break down the obstacles in Chiang Mai province to establishing an effective provincial committee to combat trafficking. However, unless there are believed to be reasonable prospects of this succeeding, it would be better not to invest further effort and resources in building the capacity of this particular committee (and concentrate instead on building the capacity of some model 'receiving' provinces – one of which might be Chiang Mai).

Progress in building the capacity of provincial level institutions outside the North to prevent trafficking appeared much slower (although two further MoUs are reported to have been signed in 2006, one involving 19 provinces in the North East and the other involving eight provinces in the East). The TICW project could almost certainly draw more heavily on the experience of other ILO initiatives to develop the capacity of local government institutions in the areas of countries in other regions where migrant workers have been trafficked or are being subjected to forced labour and related forms of abuse.

6.4.3 Knowledge base

The project has issued one publication documenting changes in Thailand's laws concerning employment and protection of migrant workers, including the country's agreements neighbouring countries (by Professor Vitit Muntarhorn, referred to above). One additional publication has examined the experience of Cambodians migrating into Thailand. Although research has been carried out by the project concerning four sectors of employment in Thailand where trafficked or forced labour was reportedly being used, the findings have not yet been finalised or published. According to members of the TICW team, the absence of

published research findings has made it more difficult to convince government officials in Central Thailand that migrants are being trafficked and exploited.

In Northern Thailand the project supported research at Chiang Mai University to help identify districts, villages and households which were particularly vulnerable to being trafficked. Within the project as a whole, this research is significant as it apparently represents the only systematic attempt to use existing data to work out who is disproportionately vulnerable to being trafficked (i.e. what profile of person and what type of community they come from). In principle, once data has been collected about people being trafficked, it reveals common characteristics about the profile of some or all of them, which can be used to ensure that preventive and protective measures are targeted on the communities, households and individuals who are disproportionately vulnerable in the areas which trafficking victims come from. This technique has been tried elsewhere.⁶¹ However, the Chiang Mai University project has gone further than similar projects elsewhere and tried to combine information available about the origins of trafficking victims in Phayao province with other social indicators in a single data base in order to show which communities are most at risk. This is an important initiative, but evidently also a controversial one, which has been criticised by various people, including the Chair of the National Committee on Combating Trafficking in Children and Women,⁶² even though it is not yet complete. It is consequently important to learn as much as possible from the project—both in terms of its strengths and its weaknesses.

Possibly Phayao is not typical of the other sources targeted by the TICW project and the social indicators used by the data-base to predict vulnerability (to being trafficked), which are reportedly drawn from nine separate existing data-bases, covering issues such as citizenship, health and poverty, are less significant and dependable than data collected from individuals who have been trafficked in the recent past.⁶³

6.4.4 Advocacy and awareness raising

Since the beginning of Phase 2, the TICW project in Thailand has been involved in various efforts to persuade government officials in central government and at provincial level and also employers' organizations and trade unions that they should take action to help end the serious abuses to which migrant workers are being subjected. In effect, the project has been engaging in advocacy in pursuit of its ends. However, it seems that the project staff involved did not perceive this to be an advocacy activity, nor to have organized it systematically on

⁶¹ See 'Four sets of characteristics which may reveal salient characteristics about trafficked children' (concerning 'Identity and place of origin', 'Child victim's school education and what the child was doing at the time she/he was trafficked', 'Characteristics of the household from which a child was trafficked', and 'Circumstances in which a child left home or was trafficked') in Mike Dottridge, *A handbook on planning projects to prevent child trafficking*, Terre des Hommes, forthcoming.

⁶² In her review of TICW initiatives in Thailand (commissioned by the project), the Chair of the National Committee on Combating Trafficking in Children and Women comments, "The three components of data collection, i.e., on the supply side, demand side, and victims of trafficking, are too ambitious for the types of personnel available, knowledge and skills required, available resources and 14 months time-frame."

⁶³ For example, the data-base apparently did not highlight an important finding of a social scientist who conducted research in a village in Phayao, that the second daughter in a household was more likely to be trafficked than either an oldest daughter or a third daughter. See Lisa Rende Taylor, 'Dangerous Trade-offs. The Behavioral Ecology of Child Labor and Prostitution in Rural Northern Thailand', *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 46, No. 3, June 2005.

the basis of an advocacy strategy. As a result, there were reported to have been disagreements between staff who prefer a ‘diplomatic’ or ‘softly softly’ approach and those in favour of other methods. The solution, in Thailand and elsewhere, should be for the project to have its own explicit advocacy strategies. Evidently, in Thailand, as in other countries where government officials do not like being put under pressure by foreigners or representatives of international organizations, it is important that these advocacy strategies should be adapted to local norms in order to be as effective as possible. In effect, advocacy should be strengthened through national and local organizations with their indigenous advocacy methods, rather than assuming an overtly more aggressive stance. In addition, more active and technical work should be aimed at the top level bodies that are providing comprehensive anti-trafficking training for their subordinate units as well as developing and monitoring national policies and programmes.

As it was not clear that project staff perceived efforts to ‘influence’ others (and eventually change the policy of either central government, local government or other organizations) as part of their advocacy work, it would be appropriate to organize staff training both on advocacy methods and on how to design appropriate advocacy strategies. This should also help staff understand better how the activities of some other organizations complement theirs (for example, organizations concerned about corporate social responsibility) and how to make best use of these complementary strengths.

The project has supported a campaign concerning (forced) child beggars in Bangkok which involves publicity and awareness raising. This has an impressive web-site (at <http://www.stop-childbegging.org>) and has produced a video about the predicament of children who are recruited in neighbouring countries and trafficked to Thailand to beg. The campaign is evidently attempting to influence ‘demand’ in much the same way as similar campaigns in other parts of the world (such as Greece⁶⁴) by persuading people with religious motives for donating charity not to donate money to children who may have been trafficked. The campaign is reported to have been successful in persuading the public authorities to pay more attention to this trafficking problem, and they have intercepted and provided care for child beggars. However, as in other policing initiatives in response to trafficking, there is a danger that this may be a one-off response. Neither TICW staff nor the implementing partner appear to have had access to the experience which others have already acquired in campaigns to prevent similar trafficking (of children to beg) in other regions by influencing people who donate money to beggars. The TICW project should facilitate this access (or ensure that any existing expertise on the topic within IPEC is made available to their partner). Furthermore, as in all campaigns of this sort, there is a need to have some quantitative information at the outset about the scale of the problem and the views of the individuals who the campaign intends to influence (people who donate money to child beggars), in order to assess subsequently whether the campaign is making progress. It is not clear that enough baseline information is available.

6.4.5 Direct assistance

The evaluators learned about direct assistance provided in Chiang Rai, Phayao and Samut Sakhon provinces.

⁶⁴ For example, see: Terre des Hommes and Ndihmë për Fëmijët, Child trafficking in South-Eastern Europe: The Development of Good Practices to Protect Albanian Children, Terre des Hommes Foundation. Lausanne, 2005. Can be downloaded in English from <http://www.tdh.ch> or <http://tdh.ch/cms/Documentaion.705.0.html?&L=1#3176>

6.4.5.1 'Source' areas in Northern Thailand

The information presented about the impact of micro-credit activities in Phayao during Phase 1 of the project did not provide significant evidence about the usefulness of revolving credit to prevent trafficking. The other direct assistance activities in northern Thailand involved providing alternatively livelihoods for minority ('hill tribe') communities and life skills in schools.

It was undoubtedly appropriate to focus some direct assistance activities to prevent trafficking on minorities, as they were reported in the past to have been trafficked in disproportionate numbers. An alternative livelihood strategy promoting eco-tourism looked interesting, although it is questionable whether poverty or lack of income have been major causal factors in making members of Thailand's minorities vulnerable to being trafficked. The experience of other organizations (UNESCO) reportedly pinpoints their lack of citizenship as the key single most important reason for their vulnerability as non-citizens to being trafficked. The key achievement of the NGO running the eco-tourism project (the Mirror Arts Foundation, MAF) may consequently have been to enable non-citizens to acquire Thai citizenship (and the figures provided by MAF indicated it had been very successful at this) and to be more aware of the disadvantages they would face if travelling elsewhere in Thailand without being able to demonstrate full citizenship.

It would be helpful if the TICW project could establish with greater certainty just what the impact of its various direct assistance has been, as the evaluators did not find clear evidence. Even on the issue of education there was contradictory evidence (i.e. some adolescents were reported to be more inclined to migrate because they stayed at school longer – and learned more about the outside world; at the same time, they may have become less vulnerable to being trafficked once they migrate, on account of their longer schooling). While it is unlikely to be possible to establish clearly what the impact of different direct assistance activities has been, more evidence (about the impact) and better analysis is required in order to assess which of the various direct assistance activities would be appropriate to replicate either elsewhere in northern Thailand or elsewhere in the world.

As far as the income-generating activities are concerned, it seems important that the TICW project should ensure that MAF coordinates with others who have already developed expertise in running eco-tourism projects for minorities in Thailand.

The TICW project has supported efforts to develop a life skills curriculum and life skills teaching materials in six schools in Chiang Rai. The evaluators were told by Dr Saisuree and others that one of these, Baan Mae Chan School, was a model of excellence, but were unable to get first hand experience of the school's achievements as their visit occurred during school holidays. Instead, they visited a different school and were shown the curriculum and teaching materials which the school had developed itself (with TICW's support) for teaching life skills. They were told that as a result of learning life skills, children have better understanding of risks they may face later on. One of the teachers involved noted that there was a need to target the children's parents and ensure that they have as good an understanding of the risks which young people face when migrating to look for work elsewhere.

On the basis of the experience of five separate schools, the district education authority was reported to be in the process of introducing the teaching of life skills into the school curriculum throughout the district. Teaching life skills can evidently be combined with information about migration (for work), trafficking and livelihoods to make a useful

contribution to preventing trafficking. Some further general comments about teaching life skills are included in the section 8.3.5.2 below.

6.4.5.2 Destination areas in Central Thailand

The evaluators also visited one site of direct assistance activities in a destination area, in the fishing port of Samut Sakhon, a social centre and drop-in centre for migrant workers and their children run as part of an Action Programme by the Labour Rights Protection Network (LRPN). This seemed an excellent first step to providing services to exploited migrants and their relatives, but only a first step. The adult migrants interviewed by the evaluator said they were delighted that they were learning about their rights and that their children could attend the LRPN learning centre and learn to read and write there, which should, in principle, enable them to attend school in Thailand. However, the evaluation team was told that it was not only the inability to communicate in Thai which prevents migrant children from attending school. It was also because the children's security could not be assured if they attended school (or even if they made their own way from their homes or parents' work places to the LRPN centre), as the security forces were said to detain them routinely. This rather drastic scenario means that both the children's parents and everyone else who is concerned about the children's best interests considers that the children are better off working with their parents (in shell fish factories) than attending school! Evidently, the ILO and other inter-governmental organizations should intensify their efforts to end the security forces' harassment of children..

The direct assistance programmes to increase the income of minority communities in Chiang Rai and to provide non-formal education to migrants' children in Samut Sakhon are both appropriate to the TICW project to support, but both would be redundant if the communities concerned were allowed to exercise their basic human rights. In such circumstances, the ILO and TICW project should certainly continue to provide the direct assistance which they have been providing, but should complement this systematically with far more intensive efforts at the political level to end the discrimination and marginalization which places members of such communities in danger in the first place.

6.4.6 Sustainability

The capacity building efforts in provinces from which migrants have been trafficked appeared likely to be sustained after the conclusion of the project, particularly in Phayao.

In contrast, none of the efforts in 'destination' areas appeared sustainable yet – either those involving building the capacity of provincial government and its various departments or those involving direct assistance to migrants and their families. The direct assistance activities in destination areas appeared to be in their infancy and it would consequently be premature to try and mainstream them. Initiatives such as the LRPN learning centre in Samut Sakhon will require significant further support before they can become sustainable. Those which have been started require nurturing further, while other experiments still need to be started in order to increase the project's experience about what forms of direct assistance work and what forms do not in destination areas. This experience is important not only for the purposes of the TICW project in Thailand, but more broadly as far as any destinations for foreign migrants who are sometimes trafficked are concerned.

In destination areas it consequently seems that sustainability depends on the development of Thailand's national programme to eradicate the worst forms of child labour (under the terms

of Convention 182) and can be pursued by developing a concern about (and a corresponding focus in various institutions for) migrant children. IPEC's advisor to Thailand's National Committee on the implementation of Convention 182 is reported already to have proposed to the Committee that it should appoint a Sub-Committee on Migrant Children to advocate for their rights. In the meantime, it would be appropriate for the TICW project (and IPEC) to support further initiatives to enhance the capacity of the Thai Coordinating Committee on Migrant Children (Thai-Cord) to press for measures to protect migrant children and promote respect for their rights

It seems likely that the Ministry of Labour's interest and concern about abuse of migrant workers will continue beyond the end of the TICW project, although this may not be due to the project's efforts (but may be spurred by concern about the potential for public criticism). Furthermore, at present it seems unlikely that action to deal with this concern will be coordinated closely with other actions being taken to prevent trafficking. It is consequently a priority for the TICW project to promote better coordination at national level over the coming two years.

6.5 Viet Nam

6.5.1 Summary

The progress of Phase 2 has been held up more severely in Viet Nam than in any other country involved in the TICW project, so such an extent that the entire viability of the project in Viet Nam has been undermined. A Letter of Agreement between the ILO and the Department of Social Evils Prevention (DSEP) in Viet Nam's Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) was signed in May 2005, almost two years after the project started. Although by this time the overall objectives of Phase 2 had been revised (from three to four objectives) the project document relating exclusively to Viet Nam which was appended to the Letter of Agreement refers only to the original three objectives (i.e. "Information, mobilization and advocacy" activities are grouped together). The evaluation team was concerned that, as a result, there was some obfuscation about exactly what the project was aiming to achieve. However, at least the Project document is very clear in defining *who* is intended to benefit primarily from direct assistance activities organized during Phase 2 (children aged 10 to 17).⁶⁵

The evaluator was told of various reasons why approval for the project was delayed for so long. Some were outside the control of both the ILO and MOLISA.⁶⁶ The use of the phase

⁶⁵ "Special attention will be paid to children between the ages of 10 and 14, and those aged 15 to 17, since these age groups are particularly at risk of entering exploitative labour, leaving home or, in the case of the younger group of children, at the point of considering doing so within the next few years". Project Document (annex to Letter of Agreement), 'Supporting The Combat Of Trafficking In Children And Women In Vietnam, Section 3.2.2.

⁶⁶ In particular, references in the US State Department's annual report on trafficking in persons to the issue of "labor exploitation" are reported to have caused consternation in Viet Nam. The report issued in June 2003 said: "Vietnamese rural laborers are exploited by traffickers. Labor export companies recruit and send workers abroad; some of these laborers have been known to suffer trafficking abuses... Particular concern remains, however, about the government's effectiveness in addressing cases of labor exploitation. Vietnamese state-owned labor companies have entered into international contracts that have resulted in incidents of labor trafficking. The government needs to protect workers through better oversight measures in these companies, which it regulates." Both the two subsequent reports by the US State Department repeated criticisms of the Government of Viet Nam for taking inadequate action to regulate the activities of companies providing

“labour exploitation” in the TICW project document was one cause for the delays. It was evident to the evaluator that by March 2006 that there was still a lack of conceptual clarity on the part of the authorities about the project’s objectives and that they were concerned about the use of certain phrases which implied that Vietnamese children and women have actually been subjected to the forms of economic exploitation associated with trafficking within Viet Nam.⁶⁷

Nevertheless, despite this delay, during 2004 the Government endorsed a National Plan of Action on Trafficking in Persons, which some of the Phase 1 activities of TICW fed into and the implementation of which in specific provinces could potentially be part of the Phase 2 of TICW project. Steps to implement this overall plan continued during 2005, with the establishment of a Steering Committee under the leadership of the Ministry of Public Security and, in the same month that the work plan of Phase 2 was approved (December 2005) the approval by the Government of four main sub-components of the National Plan (education and awareness; the suppression of crime; the rehabilitation of victims; and strengthening the legal framework). The MOLISA and DSEP have lead agency responsibility for the third sub-component (rehabilitation), whereas the Women’s Union has lead responsibility for the first one (education and awareness raising).

The statement made by the Director of DSEP at the September 2005 SURAC meeting underlined his understanding that ‘trafficking’ refers principally to cases in which Vietnamese women and girls are subjected to commercial sexual exploitation or forced marriage outside Viet Nam.⁶⁸ This narrow interpretation (which was echoed by others; see below) could potentially be a fatal flaw to the project’s implementation.

One complication is that the MOLISA team which is the ILO’s partner in the TICW project, DSEP, is responsible for policy relating to prostitution and the use of drugs, rather than for labour protection or child labour, and consequently has experience and expertise in relation to commercial sexual exploitation, but not in relation to the other forms of exploitation which are associated with trafficking and not in relation to child protection. Not surprisingly, when DSEP personnel talk about trafficking, they refer almost exclusively to trafficking for sexual exploitation.

The DSEP evidently has expertise which is highly relevant to the rehabilitation and recovery of victims of trafficking, but much less relevant to prevention. Although the evaluator did not meet the MOLISA team responsible for protecting labour rights, he concluded that without the direct involvement of this separate team, the project would not be sustainable as far as the MOLISA was concerned once the TICW’s support was withdrawn. Indeed,

Vietnamese workers overseas and to stop some being trafficked. Although the June 2005 report noted that “there were no confirmed reports during the rating period”, it nevertheless asserted that “some of these laborers were victims of abuses that constitute ‘involuntary servitude,’ a severe form of trafficking”. The use of the same phrase, “labour exploitation”, in the US State Department’s report and the TICW project documents appears to have provoked concern in Viet Nam that the TICW project would expose the country to further criticism for allowing “labour exploitation” to occur, even though the TICW project had no intention of investigating the activities of employment agencies which operate legally and provide Vietnamese to work abroad.

⁶⁷ In addition, delays had already been reported during Phase 1 in Viet Nam. The Phase 2 Project Document notes: “The slow start of Phase I of TICW as a result of bureaucratic process means there are fewer lessons learned to date”.

⁶⁸ Nguyen Van Minh, Director of Department of Social Evils Prevention (DSEP), Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA), Combating The Trafficking In Women And Children In Vietnam Through The Impacts Of Labour & Employment Policies, statement at the Third SURAC session, September 2005.

although DSEP staff told the evaluator that they wanted more advice and technical assistance to enable them to prepare activities related to the TICW project, he was concerned that further investment in building the capacity of the DSEP was unlikely to produce the desired results.

Although particular difficulties have arisen on account of the TICW project's linked with DSEP, the evaluator understood that similar difficulties with other parts of the Ministry of Labour had hampered the development of IPEC's activities in the past.

Unfortunately, there have been further developments since the Letter of Agreement was signed which have complicated and to some extent soured relations between DSEP and the TICW project. The Project Document annexed to the Letter of Agreement stipulated that the project would last from May 2005 to December 2007 and have an allocation of US\$885,152. DSEP understood that, out of this total, a sum of US\$550,000 would be available to finance activities in Viet Nam under budget lines for project sub-contracts. However, only a few months later, the TICW project headquarters told DSEP that this sum had been reduced to US\$324,000, as the period of project implementation had been reduced. Understandably, DSEP staff resent the fact that this was not spelled out earlier, when the Letter of Agreement was signed, in particular as the MOLISA is accountable to the Office of the Prime Minister for the entire original sum.

Some time after a National Stakeholders Workshop was held in June 2005 and Provincial Stakeholders Workshops were held in October 2005 in the three provinces where Phase 2 activities were to be organized, the MOLISA eventually endorsed the project's overall work plan, in December 2005.

The evaluator met members of the TICW project national steering committee, but there no project activities were occurring near to Hanoi during Phase 2 that he could observe (with the exception of advocacy activities by children, mentioned below). During his visit to the city of Thanh Hoa, south of Hanoi, and a nearby rural township (in both of which he was received very hospitably and given all the cooperation he needed), he was able to obtain information about the ongoing impact of a revolving credit scheme established during Phase 1 of the project, linked to awareness raising activities, and also about children's advocacy activities in 2004.

During his concluding session with the TICW project national steering committee and staff of the DSEP, the evaluator pointed out the apparent contradiction of trying to run a number of direct assistance activities designed to prevent trafficking while at the same time also trying to mainstream these at national level (i.e. without waiting to see what direct assistance activities are shown to be effective). Those present did not appear to see this as a problem. The evaluator suggested that it was inevitable that priorities would have to be made (and inquired how they were being made), for the amount of money allocated by the TICW project for activities under DSEP's supervision was now substantially lower than they had expected, and the time left before the end of the project would not permit all the intended activities to be carried out. Once again, the members of the national steering committee appeared to think that all the activities which had been planned to take place over a much long period could still be undertaken. The evaluation team was concerned that DSEP staff did not appear to see any contradiction in running direct assistance activities designed to prevent trafficking and activities to mainstream these at national level at the same time, rather than sequentially. This suggested that there might still be some fundamental misunderstandings about what the TICW's objectives and programme logic. The members

of the national steering committee expressed the hope that the donor would be willing to extend the deadline for the end of the project. Their perception, that the evaluator's visit was part of an ongoing process of negotiation with the ILO, undermined the potential for the evaluation team to find out about the situation as it is, rather than as it might be.

In theory it would be possible for the TICW project to invest further in efforts to explain the objectives of the project and the intended relationship between different activities to its principal partner, DSEP. The evaluation team was unsure that this would have the desired effect.

6.5.2 Capacity building

Although in theory the TICW project offers a high level of continuity between Phase 1 and Phase 2, in practice the long lapse in time between Phase 1 activities and the provincial stakeholder workshops in 2005 meant that the advantages of this were lost. Furthermore, at provincial level the period of direct assistance activities in Phase 1 was reported to have been short (only five months), so that there was relatively little to build on.

Because of the obligation on government at all levels to implement the National Plan against Trafficking in Persons, it was apparent that government departments and agencies at both national and provincial level were ready to take advantage of the capacity building support offered by Phase 2 of the TICW project. In the province visited by the evaluator, Thanh Hoa, it was particularly clear that, at provincial level, different government departments and agencies were willing to sit down together to develop better coordination and interested in increasing their knowledge and skills in organizing activities to prevent trafficking.

However, in Thanh Hoa as well as at national level, it was apparent that 'trafficking in children and women' is being interpreted to refer primarily to refer to cases of women or girls trafficked overseas for forced marriage or prostitution. Indeed, there was some suggestion in statistics presented by the Women's Union representative in the project's provincial steering committee that any cases in which Vietnamese women got married while abroad might be considered to have been trafficked. This interpretation appeared to have a strong influence on the types of direct assistance which the steering committee considered to be appropriate to organize during Phase 2 (especially as the Women's Union appeared to be the main implementing partner for direct assistance activities), putting the focus on young adult women who might migrate overseas for marriage, rather than younger children and adolescents migrating within Viet Nam, who are also vulnerable to being trafficked.

This may be more fatal as a flaw (to prevent the project achieving its objectives) in a province which is a source of emigrants (which Thanh Hoa is) than in areas involved in direct activities which are destinations for internal migrants. The evaluator heard that interesting direct assistance activities were starting up in Ho Chi Minh City (a major destination), which did not appear to be focused only narrowly on preventing trafficking for sexual exploitation, but did not have a chance to collect any evidence about these.

At national level, representatives of both an employers' and a workers' organization were represented on the project's national steering committee. At provincial level, the employers' organization was said to be playing a role, but the workers' organization was said not to be.

6.5.3 Knowledge base

The evaluator learnt that the TICW project is cooperating with other international organizations to produce a handbook for training people in Viet Nam about trafficking in persons (a National Counter Trafficking Training Manual).

The evaluator also heard about research being conducted outside the framework of the TICW project concerning child domestic workers in Ho Chi Minh City and a series of obstacles which researchers encountered in conducting objective research. The experience suggested that, despite the difficulties in conducting research and disseminating its findings, it should be a priority for the TICW project to collect information about forms of forced labour, servitude or slavery-like practices occurring in places to which people migrate within Viet Nam.

6.5.4 Advocacy and awareness raising

One advantage of the delay in starting Phase 2 of the project in Viet Nam is that the project staff could devote their attention to the organization of the National Children's Forum in August 2004 and the attendance on a Vietnamese contingent at the subsequent Mekong Children's Forum.⁶⁹ The National Forum was organized by the ILO (TICW) together with four other international organizations (SCUK, UNIAP, UNICEF and IOM) and with Viet Nam's mass youth organization, the Central Pioneer Council. Each of the international organizations involved children from the areas of the country where it was organizing activities and many of the children involved had personal experience of exploitation (but not only trafficking) were involved. The National Forum itself was preceded by the training of adult facilitators and activities by the children involved. In Thanh Hoa province, for example, during a preparatory period of two months children in two communes collected information about children labour and child trafficking and produced drawings, poems and plays on issues linked to child exploitation.

The National Forum lasted three days in August 2004 and involved 13 groups of children (a total of 156 children) and 26 facilitators. The delegations of children from around the country compared their concerns and products and agreed a list of 15 recommendations which were presented on a fourth day to representatives of national and provincial government and international organizations. A group of five children were also elected to attend the sub-regional forum in Bangkok and to present the recommendations of the Vietnamese National Forum there. At the sub-regional forum one of the boys from Viet Nam was the principal spokesperson of the entire children's forum. A further meeting was organized in Viet Nam after the sub-regional forum to allow those who had gone to Bangkok to report back to their peers.

Vietnamese policy-makers attended both the National Forum and the Mekong Children's Forum in Bangkok and heard the children's concerns and recommendations. To some extent government officials were held accountable by the children at the National Forum, insofar as they answered penetrating questions posed by children. While this did not result in any obvious changes of policy, the TICW team believed that it had been an important part of the

⁶⁹ See: Report on National Children's Forum. We speak out on Prevention of Child Trafficking and Labour. August 2004.

ongoing process of helping officials understand the realities which children and young people were facing.⁷⁰

The willingness of government officials to answer questions at the National Forum held in 2004 has opened up the possibility to follow up the Forum by organizing further interaction between the children who participated in the 2004 activities or others associated with them and officials of central or provincial government. Although this would formally be an 'advocacy' activity, it could also make a worthwhile contribution to capacity building at both provincial level and in central government (where it need not be limited to contacts with officials from DESP or MOLISA).

6.5.5 Direct assistance

The evaluator met beneficiaries of a revolving credit scheme set up under Phase 1 in a district of Thanh Hoa province. Although the information obtained does not relate to Phase 2 activities at all, it was nevertheless helpful to confirm that a small-scale revolving credit fund establishing in one commune in 2001/2 has continued to function very satisfactorily. The fund started with 120 million Dong (approximately US\$8,000) and had increased to 134 million Dong by 2006 (just under US\$9,000). Out of 120 people who have borrowed money, the fund had only two defaulters (and in one case this was because the women concerned had died). Furthermore, the fund had linked with the two others established at communal level in Thanh Hoa province during Phase 1 and an agreement that if one fund made a significant loss, it would be able to draw on funds from the other two. However, this has not been necessary.

Although the phase of direct assistance activities during Phase 1 which had involved setting up the revolving credit union had only lasted five months, the head of the commune Women's Union was still keeping detailed records of the credit fund's transactions and was able to report on the benefits she knew the loans had given to local women over the past four years. Women borrowing money were reported to make a formal commitment to the project's objectives, including not to allow their children to be trafficked. Monthly Women's Federation meetings held in the commune were used to organize loans and repayments, so there was evidently strong social pressure on borrowers to repay their loans. In addition, the evaluator talked to a group of eight women who had benefited from loans, who expressed great appreciation for the role played by the head of the commune Women's Union and her commitment to ensuring the loans were available to those in need. The loans had evidently meant that a considerable number of married women had been able to engage in income generating activities in their home commune, instead of leaving their families on a temporary basis and seeking employment elsewhere. They reported that they (as women) had no access to any other forms of credit. The implication was that, indirectly, the loans had helped them ensure that their children could remain at school and living at home, rather than migrating away before they finished their basic education. However, in this case (as in most others involved loans), it was not clear whether the loans have reduced the vulnerability of

⁷⁰ Provincial officials in Thanh Hoa province reported that opinions expressed by children had been taken into account in a very direct way. They noted that information materials about trafficking which had been distributed to children's groups at the time of an organized competition had been severely criticized by the children taking part (who said they were not realistic enough) and that the materials were rewritten as a result on the basis of information provided by the children. The Thanh Hoa officials suggested this had occurred during Phase 1 of the project, but may have been referring to events in 2004.

adolescents or young adults to being trafficked, as the benefits appeared to have accrued to a group of older adult women (older than the project's target group, 'up to 25 years old).

The provincial department of MOLISA (DOLISA) was reported to be continuing to check the credit union's accounts on a quarterly basis. However, since the end of Phase 1, the provincial department has not continued reporting to the MOLISA, nor to the ILO on the use of funds.

The evaluator also learnt that TICW staff are helping organize activities in three southern provinces from which women and girls have emigrated to Cambodia and Taiwan and become involved in abusive marriages or prostitution. These activities are supported with UN Human Security Fund finance (approximately US\$300,000).

6.5.6 Sustainability

The evaluation team was concerned that the DSEP's particular interest in trafficking linked to commercial sexual exploitation made it unlikely that any attempts to prevent other forms of trafficking from occurring would be sustained by DSEP or the MOLISA beyond the end of the project. Once again, the sustainability of activities concerning children could be made sustainable by creating a special focus on child and adolescent (internal) migrants within Viet Nam's national IPEC programme.

6.5.7 Conclusion concerning Viet Nam

Although the Letter of Agreement concerning implementation of Phase 2 was signed almost a year ago, the evaluation team felt that the project is still in a difficult situation in Viet Nam. In order to ensure that the money made available by the donor is used in a fruitful way, fundamental problems need to be sorted out soon, rather than allowing the project to drift on, as this will possibly produce a few good results but result in substantial waste.

The evaluation team was impressed by the high quality of the National Forum for Children organized in 2004, both its preparation and the way it was carried out. This showed that the staff of TICW, SCUK and their partners had the expertise necessary to carry out high quality activities (in this instance advocacy activities), when allowed to.

7 Sustainability

7.1 The Sub-Regional Level

The revival of SURAC sessions means that the ILO has a tripartite forum at which ministries of labour and social partners can discuss and respond to sub-regional initiatives taken by the COMMIT process.

The various bilateral Memoranda of Understanding signed between the Government of Thailand and the governments of Cambodia and Lao PDR (and, so some extent, of Myanmar) have created the beginnings of a framework for responding to trafficking within the part of the GMS sub-region which currently has the greatest need for a continuing sub-regional approach (i.e. Thailand and the three countries supplying it with migrant workers: Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar).

The COMMIT process appears sustainable enough to fulfil other sub-regional functions, supported by the UNIAP. However, the more that the TICW project can do over the coming two years to ensure that ministries of labour participate in the COMMIT process adequately, the more the priorities and methods developed during the TICW project seem likely to be sustained beyond the end of the project.

7.2 Phasing out the project's involvement in providing direct assistance

The Project Document intended direct assistance activities to come to an end by the middle of Phase 2 (i.e. early 2006) and the donor is keen to see the plan adhered to.

The evaluators felt strongly that some direct assistance activities had not been going on for long enough to draw conclusions about whether they are appropriate to mainstream. This is particularly the case as far as direct assistance in destination areas is concerned, particular in Thailand and Cambodia. It is also the case as far as all direct assistance activities in Viet Nam are concerned, on account of a two-year delay there in starting Phase 2.

In principle the direct assistance activities in the areas migrants come from could now be ended. However, direct assistance in these areas is not as advanced as might have been expected e.g. Vietnam and Lao PDR. In numerous cases little attention has been paid to evaluating whether the activities have made a significant contribution to preventing trafficking. In such cases it would be inappropriate to recommend the activity as 'good practice' for mainstreaming or for replication elsewhere until and unless more evidence is available about its impact. As it may be more difficult to find out about impact of direct assistance activities once they have ended, this might justify prolonging some of them (see comments in section 5.3 above).

In destination areas, the project has fallen behind its schedule as far as direct assistance activities are concerned. It would be appropriate to prolong the direct assistance activities in Thailand until the end of 2006 and possibly those in Viet Nam's Ho Chi Minh City for even longer. Direct assistance work in destination areas also requires an adequate duration if it is to prove its worth.

7.3 The need for a phase out strategy

The evaluation team noted that there was no phase out strategy for the project as a whole, although there was no likelihood that the present donor would continue to support the project or its activities beyond 2008. The CTA acknowledged that little had been done to plan a phase out strategy for the project yet and, like the evaluators, was concerned that it was premature to phase out all the project's direct assistance activities in 2006. She thought that attention would be given to phasing out the project once the MTE was received, so that it could be integrated into planning any modifications for the remaining period of the project.

In certain areas there is clear potential for national IPEC programmes to pick up aspects of the TICW project and to continue with similar activities, for example under the rubric of 'migrant working children'. There seems to be much less potential for IPEC to continue activities which are focused as much or more on young adult women than on adolescents. It is these activities in particular which require careful 'phase out' planning in the near future.

8 Special aspects

8.1 Participation: the project's effectiveness at promoting participation of stakeholders and beneficiaries and local ownership of the project

The final evaluation of Phase 1 of the project recommended that to develop participation further, “the project could give more attention to ensuring that participatory approaches, to underpin methods and tools, are understood and encouraged throughout all project interventions, and right through the development process”. The evaluation team was interested to see what had been accomplished since 2003 to achieve this.

8.1.1 Local ownership and participation of stakeholders

The project has worked hard at promoting ‘local ownership’, notably through PSOE exercises. However, the evaluation team was concerned that promoting ‘local ownership’ of the project through the participation of stakeholders had often meant subordinating the views and interests of the project’s beneficiaries to those of the project’s stakeholder partners. For example, at the stage of selecting project sites for Phase 2, it seems to have been government partners who had the main say in deciding where direct assistance activities should be organized. In such cases a better balance could be achieved by giving the project’s intended beneficiaries a stronger voice.

The project has been extremely effective in developing a sense of local ownership in areas where other inter-governmental organizations are not involved in running projects at local level, such as Chiang Rai and Phayao provinces in northern Thailand, Yunnan Province in China and parts of Lao PDR. This success shows that the ILO is not perceived in such areas to be a powerful organization operating at international level, which cannot achieve anything useful at grassroots level. In all these cases, it was also due to good management by the project’s staff and their willingness not to seek personal praise for their role, but rather to enable their partners to feel in control and to feel that the successes were genuinely their own.

8.1.2 Participation of beneficiaries

The project’s beneficiaries include children and young women who are at risk of being trafficked and who potentially benefit from measures to prevent trafficking. They also include the households and communities of such potential victims.

The project works closely with women’s federations in two countries (China and Viet Nam) as partners, as well as with the women’s federation in Lao PDR, so representatives of women in general have a strong voice within the project. However, this is not the same as giving a voice specifically to young women in the 18 to 25 year age group who are at risk of being trafficked.

During 2004 the project invested time and effort in enabling children to participate in a major advocacy initiative. This is reported in section 5.2.2 above (‘Mobilizing the project’s intended beneficiaries—The Mekong Children’s Forum: an example of ‘good practice’ for the ILO and IPEC to replicate’).

The 2004 meetings for children were important, but were principally an advocacy initiative to influence the COMMIT process. Doubtless the Children's Forum had wider effects and the views expressed by children in 2004 may have affected the formulation of some of the Action Programmes and other initiatives subsequently formulated by the project. However, it is not absolutely clear that this was the case.

More recently, the TICW project and SCUK organized the 'Greater Mekong Sub-Regional Capacity Building Workshop on Child Participation' in Bangkok in December 2005, the results of which are reported to be still awaiting implementation.⁷¹ The draft workshop report notes that "29 participants from five countries in the Mekong region representing government and non-government sectors attended a one week workshop of awareness raising and capacity building in child participation issues". They included representatives of government and NGOs, alongside four TICW staff members and 10 Save the Children staff. The workshop was jointly facilitated by two staff from TICW and two from Save the Children. The workshop looked at a range of child participation exercises, beyond advocacy and including methods for taking children's views into account in programme design and for involving children at all stages of the project cycle. The workshop had the objective of developing "a core group of technical managers within the GMS capable of promoting, facilitating and supporting meaningful children's participation in anti-trafficking programmes". As such it represents an important step towards promoting the participation of an important section of the TICW project's intended beneficiaries, albeit only a first step which requires following up.⁷²

The evaluators were pleased to note the TICW project's commitment to developing the expertise necessary to allow meaningful child participation and noted that direct contact with children requires both TICW project staff and those of all the partner agencies working with them who are in contact with children to be operating under an adequate child protection policy.⁷³ The evaluation team did not have the opportunity to check whether such policies were in place at every level, nor to check whether they were supported by appropriate mechanisms to allow children (and adults) to register complaints and other mechanisms to ensure full adherence to the policies.

One way of encouraging the participation of children and the project's other beneficiaries within the TICW project during its final two years would be to require every proposal for an Action Programme or Mini-Programme to contain a statement explaining how the views of the programme's intended beneficiaries (whether children or young adults) have been sought and taken into account in the course of the design of the programme. This information should also be reflected in the section on 'Action Programme Design and Implementation' which is included in the project's six-monthly Technical Progress Reports.

⁷¹ The workshop noted that defining 'child participation' is not easy. The draft report on the workshop reports that "Participants at the workshop identified seven different elements of child participation, including "involvement in the decision making and planning process", "involvement in activities" and "involvement in the monitoring and evaluation process".

⁷² Further benefits from promoting child participation are summarised in: Gerison Lansdown, Can you hear me? The rights of young children to participate in decisions affecting them, Working Paper in early childhood development no. 36, Bernard van Leer Foundation, 2005, http://www.bernardvanleer.org/publications/Browse_by_series/publications_results?getSerie=Working%20Papers

⁷³ I.e. policies which fully reflect the core principles presented by the UN system's Inter-Agency Standing Committee Task Force on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Humanitarian Crises (June 2002).

8.1.3 Potential advantages of enhanced participation

Adopting effective and successful programme logic in initiatives to prevent trafficking requires close consultation with the people who might be trafficked and those in their communities who have already been trafficked. Without grounding the programme logic on a good understanding of the reasons why they behave in certain ways and make their choices, initiatives to prevent trafficking are likely to be ineffective—indeed, many have already shown this weakness.⁷⁴ In the case of the TICW project, the participation of the project's beneficiaries is vital, in addition to efforts to encourage the participation of other stakeholders.

Experience from other initiatives to prevent human trafficking suggests that individuals who have already been trafficked can both provide vital information to design projects (and specifically to affect their programme logic) and that some of them can provide useful responses to hypothetical questions about what their likely response to various prevention initiatives would be.

Equally important is the collection of information from beneficiaries during and after project activities, in order to find out how they perceive them and how the activities have affected their behaviour (or that of others involved in the trafficking process). However, while it is relatively easy to generate praise and positive comments from beneficiaries (particularly when they are in the presence of people who they believe to have high status or to influence their access to resources), unless this stage of monitoring is done carefully, the information collected may not be useful and may be misleading. A process for building confidence with some beneficiaries and interviewing them in private is therefore vital.

8.2 Monitoring Tools and Impact Assessment

8.2.1 Systems for reporting, monitoring and evaluation

There is a strong culture of monitoring and evaluation in the project. TICW staff are in close and sometimes continual contact with Action Programme partners, reviewing how the project is being implemented. This is part and parcel of the procurement and reporting processes, demonstrating an important positive effect of this project which is often missing in international development work. There is also a good level of clarity in the relationships between TICW and Action Programme partners: the relationship is one that monitors and holds Action Programme partners to account but also provides support and builds their capacity. Partner staff often commented how support of TICW had really helped them to learn. For example, Mirror Arts Foundation (MAF) in Thailand mentioned the support given with small business training and marketing (running an ecotourism initiative), as well as attention to indicators. This is a refreshing change to some development agencies which are floundering to understand the boundaries and nature of their relationships with their implementing partners and consequently sometimes abnegating their responsibility to either monitor effectively or to provide support.

⁷⁴ For comments on projects to prevent human trafficking, which have suffered from a lack of participation by their beneficiaries, see Ruth Rosenberg, Sebastian Lăzăroiu and Elena Tyuryukanova, Best Practices for Programming to Prevent Trafficking in Human Beings in Europe and Eurasia, Development Alternatives Inc for USAID, September 2004 (<http://www.vitalvoices.org/files/docs/Prevention%20assessment%20Report-formatted%20CAS1.pdf>) and Mike Dottridge, Action to Prevent Child Trafficking in South Eastern Europe. A Preliminary Assessment, UNICEF and Terre des Hommes, 2006.

In Lao PDR, project staff are in regular contact with Action Programme partners and also pay visits to project sites themselves. The Action Programme partner in Campassak province, LSCDPA, monitors each village on average every two months, spending one day per village with questions mainly focusing on the management of VDFs and the accounting system but also questions about the impact (of VDFs) with direct interaction with families and beneficiaries. In Savannakhet province, staff monitor at village level every two months and at district level every month. The district and provincial level government authorities in Lao PDR are also engaged in monitoring. For example, a provincial officer in Campassak had visited several times and the focus of the monitoring is both on accounts and management but also on trafficking issues. This too is mentioned in reports to ILO. Partners reported writing up examples of impact in reports to ILO.

Notwithstanding the evident interest and concern with monitoring, it seemed in some places there is a need for additional resources to enable monitoring to take place with the desired effect. It should be noted that all levels of government in Lao PDR, central, provincial and district, expressed the need for more funds to enable them to carry out monitoring more effectively and more frequently. Lack of staff, logistical challenges and lack of suitable transport to reach remote villages were cited as difficulties. The recognition and interest of Action Programme partners in monitoring was encouraging, even if the TICW project itself does not have the resources to meet all the demand.

This pattern is echoed in Cambodia where TICW staff are in regular contact with Action Programme partners by phone and through paper correspondence followed by monitoring visits every couple of months which involve talking to provincial level agencies. Central government felt they were unable to adequately monitor the activities of implementing partners: the National Steering Committee said it did not feel it was being reported to adequately by Action Programme partners, reports were often delayed in coming and they felt its role in overall monitoring was not being capacitated enough.

In northern Thailand, TICW's staff member is in regular contact by phone/e-mail and pays regular visits every two months.

In contrast to the strong culture of monitoring the activities of Action Programme partners, the evaluators noted that TICW staff and the project itself did not always know how to react when parts of the project are weak and not achieving their objectives. Periodic staff meetings have evidently served as an opportunity to review the general progress of the project and its sub-regional structures. However, the evaluators felt that the project's managers at sub-regional level could usefully devote more time to periodic reviews of progress at national level with national project coordinators, in order to identify obstacles and potential ways of resolving these.

8.2.2 Participatory Monitoring (and Evaluation) Tools

Partners and staff said they were monitoring the impact of project activities (and not only monitoring whether project activities were being implemented and producing their promised outputs).. They told the evaluation team that this was included in their reports. However, in all five countries here was a distinct lack of information about the impact of individual activities or of the project as a whole. Consequently, this needs strengthening: impact monitoring through consultations with beneficiaries should be a part of regular monitoring.

Finding out whether an initiative to prevent human trafficking has met its objective successfully means measuring its impact on the people it is supposed to benefit (girls, boys

and women who are at risk of being trafficked, in the case of the TICW project), rather than just evaluating the work that has been done. This is the difference between confirming that the ‘outputs’ of an intervention have been produced and finding out what its results or impact have actually been.

The mid-term evaluation of Phase 1 observed that the procedures for monitoring the TICW project’s activities were inadequate. As a result the evaluator for the mid-term evaluation was asked to design a set of participatory monitoring tools. These were issued in three parts in June 2002: Part I - Guidelines for Participatory Monitoring; Part II - Toolkit for Participatory Monitoring of interventions under ILO Mekong subregional project to combat trafficking in children and women; and Part III - Annexes. These ‘PM tools’ (as they have become known) went into use during the last year of Phase 1. In response to a request from an implementing partner in Thailand a version of the tools was translated into Thai during Phase 2 and some changes were made to simplify them. In March 2005, apparently following field tests of the simplified tools, a validation meeting concerning the PM tools was held in Chiang Rai, the text of the guidelines and the eight ‘tools’ was partially revised. Later in 2005 the project issued a publication in English containing the text of the PM tools.⁷⁵ In the process of translating the text into their national language, each country team reportedly simplified and modified the text. In Yunnan, the team apparently decided to add an extra tool concerning the role being contributed by employers.

On the face of it, the TICW project is well equipped with all the tools it needs to monitor and evaluate its own activities in ways which ensure the participation of both stakeholders and the project’s intended beneficiaries. Nevertheless, the final evaluation of Phase 1 commented that the tools were still not understood adequately and were not being used correctly. As this was less than nine months after they had first been issued, it was not surprising that they were neither fully understood or used by this time. The evaluator observed that:

“At present, communities are being involved in PME (participatory monitoring and evaluation), but they are not fully participating – they are being tool-users, but not PME designers”.

The evaluator of the Phase 11 project likened the situation to having “a full tool-box of carpentry tools and equipment, some good pieces of wood, setting to work—but having no clear idea on what is being built.”⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Tools for Prevention. Participatory Monitoring. Guidelines for practitioners in the fight against human trafficking. A tool to tackle human trafficking in the GMS. ILO. 2005.

⁷⁶ Related comments by the evaluator, which still appear pertinent, include:

- “Although there is still a considerable way to go before the project can be said to have adopted a fully functional participatory monitoring and evaluation approach, it certainly has functioning systems in operation for project monitoring, and most achievements are documented.”
- “As yet, the rhetoric of participation is, at times, stronger than the practice, and whether or not participatory approaches and methods are consistently used may depend on who is present.”
- “Introduction of fully participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation has, in part, been hampered by late development of adequate tools and methods to support the project.”
- “The real value of the tools is not yet fully understood. Tools are only useful if they do the job required. All tools will have to be adapted to particular circumstances and contexts. As yet, though, it seems as if the tools are being “reified”. Too much emphasis is placed on the tool, and too little on what the tool can help to achieve. It is a bit like have a full tool-box of carpentry tools and equipment, some good pieces of wood, setting to work – but having no clear idea on what is being built.”

Finding out how the PM/PME tools developed in the course of the TICW project were being used was only a relatively small part of the MTE in 2006. The evaluators were concerned that the language in which the PM tools is written (in English) is academic and consequently likely to be difficult for non-academics to understand: the evaluators themselves found them difficult to understand, but could not read the translated and simplified versions to assess whether these were significantly more user-friendly.

The scale of attention given to the issue in earlier evaluations and importance of having the right tools (both to ensure participation and to ensure that the project's activities are being monitored and their impact understood, both of which appear essential both for the TICW project and for other projects aiming to prevent human trafficking) is so great that the PME methods being used undoubtedly deserve an evaluation all of their own.

The evaluators regarded information from PME exercises as crucial to understand in order to assess whether the project was being successful in collecting the views of its intended beneficiaries (i.e. young women and children who might be trafficked) and ensuring that these are listened to and that listening to them results in changes in policy or practice by both the TICW project itself and its implementing partners. As government agencies generally have a reputation for not responding in a sensitive way to the views of the intended beneficiaries of anti-trafficking projects, it seems particularly important to assess whether the TICW project has succeeded in changing this state of affairs.

In general the evaluators tried to find out when and where PME exercises were being carried out, who was processing the data collected and how it was being taken into account (in terms of influencing the project's activities and leading to their modification). However, they did not observe the PM tools being used during their March 2006 visits and were consequently only able to find out about their effectiveness indirectly. Unfortunately, the evaluators did not come across many references to the outcome of PM exercises in the documentation they reviewed, nor in the project's Technical Progress Reports. This does not mean that they are not occurring in an adequate fashion, but rather than the evaluators did not obtain the evidence necessary to be confident that this is the case.

They were intrigued initially by numerous references to the PM tools and found it difficult to establish exactly what using the tools entailed or what action was being taken to use them. The sources available to the evaluators included a seven-page note, 'Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation', prepared by the project in Yunnan as part of a series documenting good practices, responses to questions about PM methods in Yunnan provided by the TICW project manager in Yunnan and a former country-level project coordinator, and the various versions of the three part guidelines prepared in 2002 and made public in 2005.

The text of the PM tools has been translated into the national language of all five countries involved in the TICW project. In most cases it seems that the original text (in English) has been modified in order to make it simpler and easier to understand, although the evaluators were unable to assess this. One of the concerns of the final evaluation of Phase 1 was that translation and simplification might distort the appropriateness of the techniques being used. In the case of the translation into Thai and modifications suggested by one of TICW's implementing partners in Thailand, this was reportedly checked by a Thai-speaking member of the IPEC DED team in Bangkok, who proposed certain changes to the translation, on the

grounds that the modifications and simplifications were inappropriate.⁷⁷ While local ownership of the tools needs to be encouraged, this should evidently not be at the expense of the methodology implicit in the original set of tools. While unacceptable changes may not have occurred, a further evaluation could find out how those proposing modifications justified them, in order to document more fully what those intending to use the PM tools felt were their short-comings.

In Yunnan it was clear that the methods suggested in the PM toolkit are relatively costly to apply (in terms of the TICW staff time taken to supervise them, if not in terms of absolute cost), and PM exercises which were apparently due in late 2005 were reported not to have been carried out by the end of March 2006. At the end of Phase 1 of the project, a total of 120 resource persons from the 24 target villages linked to four townships in the two Phase 1 project counties had reportedly taken part in training on how to use PM tools. The unpublished note on 'Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation' in Yunnan, prepared during Phase 2 as part of an exercise to identify good practices used by TICW, reported on the PM experience at the end of Phase 1 and notes that between July 2002 and March 2003 PM activities were carried out in the four townships where the project was active, together with 12 'control' villages. The exercise involved 5,707 participants (of whom 308 were facilitators and 5,390 participants and respondents). This is a relatively large-scale PM exercise and would consequently result in a great deal of data to process, analyse, mention in project reports and take into account in both the design of TICW Phase 2 activities in Yunnan and possibly CP-TING activities as well.

In Cambodia a workshop on participatory monitoring and evaluation was attended by country project staff in about March 2005. The PM tools were adapted (only by simplifying the language; otherwise the tools were reportedly kept separate and intact) and used in sending areas. The evaluation was carried out by selected facilitators from the community, such as village chiefs and teachers. Initial impressions are that this was a good experience which enabled beneficiaries to express themselves freely as well as to conduct the evaluation themselves. The information collected was in Khmer and will apparently be summarised for future reports to the ILO. The project staff plan to use these tools in destination areas also but felt they needed further adaptation before they are really suitable for destination areas. KWCD in Cambodia are still in the process of developing their monitoring and evaluation approach and are currently relying on day to day interactions and monthly meetings with beneficiaries to give them information about the effects of the project's activities. They felt the tools provided by ILO were not suitable for their target group (sex workers) and needed adapting.

In conclusion, the evaluators were concerned that by 2006 the TICW project had still not mastered the monitoring and evaluation methods introduced in 2002 and were concerned that this might be because the methods appeared too complicated for many of the TICW project partners to use.⁷⁸ In this respect, in pursuit of high standards the project appeared to have tried to introduce techniques which were beyond the technical ability of some of those who would have to apply them. Although there has been further training in PM methods since the Chiang Rai validation meeting, it is not clear that further training will resolve this apparent problem.

⁷⁷ This seems to have caused some difficulties and may explain why large numbers of the Thai translation of the PM tools had not been disseminated by March 2006 but were being stored in the TICW offices in Bangkok.

⁷⁸ The evaluators' concern was not that the tools are too complicated to use, but rather that the TICW project's partners perceive them to be too complicated to use.

8.2.3 Evidence about the impact of the project in terms of preventing human trafficking

As noted earlier in section 2.4.2 ('Appropriateness of the project's indicators'), the project is not engaged in collecting substantial information about its impact as far as its development goal is concerned (of contributing "to the elimination of labour exploitation of children and women, and in particular the trafficking of children and women in the GMS..."). Its indicators reveal the project's progress towards the specific activities mentioned in the development goal ("the development, implementation and monitoring of effective and integrated subregional and national strategies and actions"), but this evidently does not ensure that there is a direct link between such strategies and actions and the elimination of labour exploitation and trafficking of children and women.

On the face of it, it is reasonable that the project's success should be measured in terms of the achievement of its immediate objectives, rather than its broader impact and role in reducing the number of people being trafficked. However, this means that whether levels of exploitation and trafficking are rising or falling, and however the project affects them, the project is not necessarily taking these changes into account.

More worrying, perhaps, is that project staff who are required to focus their attention on the project's immediate goals are not obliged to consider carefully whether the project is playing a useful role (in terms of preventing trafficking) and may be content to implement the project's activities, whether or not they think these are having a positive impact in terms of preventing human trafficking.

The lack of meaningful data about levels of human trafficking and the exploitation associated with trafficking undoubtedly makes it difficult to measure the project's impact and is not a fault of the TICW project, but a common flaw to all anti-trafficking initiatives in South East Asia. Nevertheless, the evaluators consider that some effort should be made by the project, together with other projects operating at sub-regional or national level, to assess their impact on the patterns of trafficking which they are trying to influence and on the lives of the individuals who have been affected. It would be appropriate for the TICW project to press the UNIAP and other relevant agencies to give attention to this. It would also be appropriate for the project to increase the level of follow-up monitoring of its beneficiaries in order to have evidence about the medium- and long-term effects of its direct assistance activities.

8.2.4 The importance of assessing the impact of direct assistance to increase income or to promote income-generating activities

As noted in section 5.3 above, it is highly desirable that, before the end of Phase 2 of the TICW project, evidence is collected to show that the alternative livelihood programme aspects of the project have prevented trafficking or been effective in benefiting individuals or individual households where someone was evidently at high risk of being trafficked, rather than simply benefiting others in the community and raising general income levels in much the same way as any other development initiative. The importance of learning what constitutes 'good practice' at the level of direct assistance is emphasised below in section 8.3.5.

8.2.5 Developing tracing or tracking methods

The evaluation team learned that IPEC has been developing methods for tracing the impact of its efforts to prevent children from being trafficked or from entering 'worst forms of child

labour’ and was told that a system for tracking some beneficiaries had been developed for the project during 2005.⁷⁹ The evaluators endorse the idea that a sample of beneficiaries in sending areas should be ‘tracked’ over several years in order to assess the effects of the preventive initiatives in which they were involved, particular direct beneficiaries (i.e. individuals who have been provided with information, credit or other opportunities to prevent them or other members of their own household from being trafficked). The evaluators were less sure that preventive initiatives in receiving areas would be suitable for such impact assessment techniques, except in the case of TICW preventive efforts in receiving areas which are targeted on individual migrants who have recently arrived and are considered to be still at risk of abuse.

8.3 Promoting good practice

The TICW project is obviously committed to ensuring that the project’s learning processes (in relation to ‘good practice’, as well as all the other lessons which can be learned from such a large and long project as TICW) are working well. It has started the effort to document good practices, following the IPEC DED guidelines, and by early 2006 a consultant had prepared a draft good practice report, based on contributions from all five project countries, some describing experiences in Phase 1 and some in Phase 2.

The evaluators were nevertheless concerned that the concept of ‘good practice’ had become rather diluted in the TICW project. They were also concerned that the project was at risk of generating interesting information to which others in the ILO or other agencies do not pay attention—in part because of this dilution of the concept of good practice. The project tends to be too non-discriminatory in its use of the terminology around this issue, referring to ‘emerging good practice’ when it is far from clear that the practice concerned meets objective criteria for being considered good practice.

Ironically, part of the reason for this problem is that both phases of the TICW project have accorded high priority to learning lessons from the project’s experience and disseminating these to others. This is entirely appropriate. However, the ways in which it goes about this need modifying.

The evaluators looked at a considerable number of publications on ‘good practices’ and ‘lessons learned’ and at others currently in draft but felt there was no clear process or objective standard for judging whether work being done in the project was really appropriate for others to take note of and replicate. Indeed, the project seems to start with the presumption that all or much of its work will end up being labelled as ‘good practice’. It was noted in some project documents that a “publication of good practices” would be produced as an output. This may simply be poor wording. One person who commended the project’s documentation told the evaluators that there seemed to be a tendency to make everything seem like a good practice. This may be because the staff or consultants who have been asked to identify good practice have not received training about the criteria needed: instead of being solidly evidence-based, many of the comments in drafts exaggerate the benefits of an initiative and leave the reader thinking that it may be propaganda! Of course, it is reasonable for a project to describe what its activities have consisted of and what they are believed to have achieved. However, it is important to distinguish between such descriptions and a presentation of good practice.

⁷⁹ See: IPEC Tracer Study Methodology Manual. Tracer Methodology to Measure Direct Impacts on Children and Families of Interventions in Trafficking Projects. Prepared by Claudia Ibarguen. December 2005.

The current problem is that genuinely good work being done by the project is lost in the wider field of work which is average or mediocre; when all is called ‘good practice’, this results in a lack of credibility. It should be noted, however, that some people were appreciative of the publications produced by the project, including its technical notes.

The evaluators noted that the phrase “lessons learned” was used rather euphemistically by TICW staff to refer to preventive initiatives which have not been successful. Just as they felt that too much was being identified as ‘good practice’, so they felt that this phrase was being misused. Many lessons which are learned are positive. Furthermore, as the TICW publication, *Tools for Prevention*, notes in its executive summary, “Mistakes made are NOT failures”. The publication emphasises that the monitoring and evaluation process should, “Analyze mistakes and undesirable outcomes, write about them, and learn from them”. Although this may be happening in theory within the TICW project, in practice the evaluators detected that staff were wary of identifying anything as a mistake and that consequently not enough is being learnt for the future about what NOT to do and how NOT to go about preventing trafficking.

8.3.1 IPEC procedures for identifying good practice

The Guidelines issued by the Design, Evaluation & Documentation (DED) Section of IPEC (Good Practices. Identification, Review Structuring, Dissemination and Application. DED Guidelines 3, October 2001) explain what good practices are in relation to child labour, specify three levels and present a series of criteria⁸⁰ as general guidelines for identifying good practices. The Guidelines indicates that information about possible good practices should be submitted the IPEC’s good practice data-base via its Good Practices Coordinator, who is possible for revising the information and selecting those possible good practices which merit further evaluation. The Guidelines state that, “While normally this [evaluation] would consist of a programme evaluation, in some situations (e.g. legal innovations) other forms of evaluations might be appropriate, e.g. expert or even peer review”.

The Guidelines also stipulate that the Good Practices Coordinator may identify a small panel of reviewers, “drawn from IPEC staff in Policy and Operations, other ILO staff, and/or others as applicable”.

While these guidelines are clear as far as the procedure for identifying good practices in IPEC as such, it seemed that the procedures being followed within the TICW project were different.

Furthermore, as the TICW project is dealing not only with child trafficking (and prevention of the worst forms of child labour which are the outcomes of child trafficking), but also with the trafficking of young adults, the criteria and processes required for identifying good practice almost certainly need to be different.

8.3.2 Criteria identified by others for assessing good practice

While respect for child rights principles guaranteed by the Convention on the Rights of the Child should underpin all good practice as far as efforts to prevent child trafficking are concerned (notably with respect to 2, 3, 6 and 12, concerning the issues of non-

⁸⁰ The criteria suggested are: Innovative or creative; effectiveness/impact; replicability; sustainability; relevance; responsive and ethical; efficiency and implementation.

discrimination, the ‘best interests’ of the child, and children’s rights to privacy and to express their views and to have these taken into account in all matters affecting them). With respect to adults who are trafficked or at risk of being trafficked, the key international standards are set out in the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights “Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking”, referred to earlier. Principle 1 states:

The human rights of trafficked persons shall be at the centre of all efforts to prevent and combat trafficking and to protect, assist and provide redress to victims.

Principle 3 states:

Anti-trafficking measures shall not adversely affect the human rights and dignity of persons, in particular the rights of those who have been trafficked, and of migrants, internally displaced persons, refugees and asylum-seekers.

In principle, therefore, any organization seeking to identify an anti-trafficking measure as ‘good practice’ should check explicitly that the measure concerned is not having any such adverse effects. Many professionals involved in anti-trafficking initiatives have suggested that this is tantamount to adopting the pledge taken by health professionals to “do no harm”.⁸¹

⁸¹ Some comments appear relevant in this context, which were made to a conference about trafficking in women and children held in 2003 by the Inter American Commission of Women and the Inter-American Children Institute. One of the expert speakers observed:

“What are best practices? In my view you can say that best practices are those activities, laws, policies, and programs that are constructed around human rights principles and that they are based upon reality, which means that they are not based on theory. They are not based on prejudice, particularly against undocumented migrants and marginalized people and they are not made for the purpose of implementing a particular political goal. They are based on the actual lives of the people who are been victimized by traffickers or are vulnerable to trafficking...Good practices must be developed by all actors and shared by all...[But] there are many practices...that have been carried out around the world but their messages have not been assessed. They have not been subjected in most instances to any kind of objective criteria to determine whether or not they are actually effective and meet the basic principle of ‘do no harm’”.

(Ann Jordan, Director of the Initiative Against Trafficking in Persons, Global Rights’, statement at conference on ‘Sharing best practices in preventing trafficking in persons, protecting victims and punishing traffickers’, Inter American Commission of Women and the Inter-American Children Institute, 20 November 2003. http://www.oas.org/documents/trafficking/default_spa.asp)

Other suggestions on the action needed to encourage ‘good practice’ in projects to prevent children and adolescents under 18 from being trafficked include:

- Improve the quality and detail of information collected about children at the destinations to which they are trafficked. Get close to the children concerned in order to do so (as recommended in IPEC’s own report, Action against Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation Children. Going where the children are... Geneva, June 2001;
- List the various ‘actors’ whose decisions result in children being trafficked and explore whether they can be influenced in a positive way to prevent trafficking;
- Identify weaknesses or failures by institutions, which allow trafficking to occur;
- Chose indicators which make it possible to measure the results of activities and to assess whether these bring about the intended changes;
- Check explicitly to see if the project has any harmful effects on the children whom it intended to help. If it does, modify the project activities accordingly;
- In addition to monitoring the results of activities, find out if they have had any effect on the overall incidence of trafficking cases.

(Source: Mike Dottridge, A handbook on planning projects to prevent child trafficking, Terre des Hommes, forthcoming).

8.3.3 Recommendations to the TICW project concerning the process for identifying and ‘validating’ good practice

The project needs to develop an internal system for separating the wheat from the chaff (genuine good practice from a range of the options which are more mediocre or average). Of course, this need not prevent the TICW project from documenting all the options which it considers to have been effective, but these should generally be described as what they are – options – rather than labelling them good practice.

A good suggestion by the DED Guidelines for identifying good practice, which the evaluators feel should be considered seriously, would be to employ the ‘peer review’ method. This has reportedly been used recently by IPEC in South Asia. Involving a number of specialists in commenting on experiences which appear to TICW staff to constitute ‘good practice’ would potentially have two different benefits: it would introduce a fairly objective quality assurance process (i.e. ‘separating the wheat from the chaff’); it would also involve individuals from other organizations in the process, increasing the likelihood that others will buy in to the identification of good practice by TICW and IPEC and subsequently promote these good practices elsewhere. At the moment this sharing of good practice among different inter-governmental organizations involved in anti-trafficking activities in general or activities to prevent trafficking in particular does not occur automatically.

It is important to note that in the view of the evaluators, any ‘peer review’ of efforts to prevent trafficking should involve individuals who have some established expertise in relation to the issue of human trafficking (or, when they are relevant as outcomes of trafficking, forced labour or child labour). It would consequently not be appropriate simply to involve individuals who represent particular institutional interests either within the ILO or in other organizations.

8.3.4 Lessons learnt about ways of preventing trafficking and potential for replication

A great deal has been learnt from the project’s experiences and, in China in particular, the process of replicating the TICW project’s approach and activities is well under way. In some ways this is worrying, for the process for evaluating specific activities and deciding that they are appropriate to replicate is inadequate—insufficient evidence is available about the impact of the activities and insufficient attention has been paid to consulting the project’s intended beneficiaries in ways which ensure that they express their genuine views and do not simply endorse activities of which they think government officials approve.

The project has learnt a great deal about how to promote alternative livelihoods in rural communities (via micro-credit or training activities), but has yet to collate its evidence about how these activities affect the emigration of the community members who are most vulnerable to being trafficked.

The project has built on the experience of others as far as education and life skills are concerned, particularly the benefits of encouraging adolescent girls to remain at school (girls from social groups which are known to be at disproportionate high risk of being trafficked). In China it has shown that a strong emphasis on gender equality is appropriate in source areas where gender discrimination is entrenched and underpins trafficking practices. However, it could go further and explore whether other efforts can be made in the girls’ home communities to challenge gender discrimination and to change specific traditional practices which have contributed to girls emigrating while they are vulnerable to being trafficked.

The project has avoided the mistake made by some other projects of investing primarily in awareness raising activities and assuming that by telling people that they might be trafficked they will somehow avoid being trafficked. However, it has not yet found adequate ways of measuring whether the awareness raising activities which it has initiated have been really helpful to those involved. It would be helpful if particular attention could be paid to evaluating the awareness raising activities which have not already been tried and evaluated by other projects, such as the ‘study tours’ for young women in Yunnan Province.

In most cases it is too early in the process of implementation to assess whether direct activities in destination areas are effective and appropriate to replicate. However, in both Kunming (Yunnan) and Sihanoukville (Cambodia) the evaluators were told that the project’s activities were highly valued and regarded as effective.

It is easier for the evaluators to draw conclusions about the project’s success at learning *how* to go about the project’s work, such as *how to* persuade government officials to pay more attention to the plight of migrant workers and *how to* increase the capacity of government departments to liaise with others and to organize initiatives to prevent trafficking. These are outlined in the section below on ‘Lessons learnt with regard to process’.

8.3.5 Providing direct assistance and identifying ‘good practice’

The project has followed up the direct assistance activities included in Phase 1 with a wider range of direct assistance initiatives in rural areas and some new forms of direct assistance in urban areas to which women and children have been trafficked.

The project’s experience has enabled it to reach conclusions about the particular circumstances in which certain forms of assistance seem effective. However, the project has accorded surprisingly little attention to the process of identifying women and children who are at disproportionately higher risk of being trafficked than others. In addition to trying to mainstream the forms of direct assistance which have been proved effective, during the remaining period of the project extra efforts should be made to collect evidence about the impact of the various direct assistance initiatives organized throughout Phases 1 and 2. While project staff are clearly convinced that the direct assistance provided by the project has had significant benefits, not enough evidence is available at present that it has meant that children and women have not been trafficked. So, while it is likely that it has been the case, it remains difficult for the TICW project to present evidence that particular forms of direct assistance or combinations of direct assistance are effective ways of preventing trafficking from occurring. In the absence of such evidence the project may have assisted the numbers of individuals mentioned in its logframe without generating evidence which will convince others that these particular forms of direct assistance would be appropriate to replicate elsewhere.

8.3.5.1 Project activities to enable rural households to generate more income

In the context of efforts to prevent trafficking by providing support for alternative livelihoods in China’s Yunnan Province, the benefits of the assistance provided by TICW as a technique to prevent trafficking remained hypothetical: increases in the income of rural households probably have a long-term impact on both the beneficiary households and the wider community in which they live, which help reduce the likelihood that people will be trafficked. However, the impact is difficult to monitor and consequently remains a matter of conjecture rather than something about which evidence is available. In such circumstances,

the project has not yet proved that the promotion of alternative livelihoods is a technique to prevent trafficking which deserves to be replicated elsewhere.

In this respect it would be helpful for the project to have collected data in a sample of rural communities on two different aspects: the number of people who are reported to have stayed home because of the increased income-generating potential and the proportion of people leaving the village (migrants) who have left and not experienced abuse. Both are difficult to measure because they are 'negatives' and especially difficult to estimate without baseline data collected earlier in the project. However, future monitoring exercises could still collect this information.

In the context of efforts in Lao PDR, the links between VDF and the prevention of trafficking are also tenuous and possibly a sterile line of inquiry. The *raison d'être* of this intervention is not to stop migration but to give people options so that they are not forced to migrate in circumstances of despair. A more subtle analysis which looks at the wider socio-economic impacts of the VDF, how it has changed the behaviour of beneficiaries and their life opportunities, whether increased economic prosperity is enabling people to leave in more safe circumstances (e.g. with more money in their pockets to tide them over), etc., would be a suitable and meaningful undertaking for the project before it winds up – both in Lao PDR and in the other areas where credit has been made available and alternative livelihoods encouraged for members of the community who are not themselves at obviously high risk of being trafficked.

Even in the case of direct assistance activities tried in many of the project countries, such as micro-credit, there has been insufficient learning about their impact and initiatives which have been revamped, such as the VDF in Lao PDR, have not been running for long enough in their present form to know whether they should be replicated in their present form.

8.3.5.2 Life skills education

Learning about human trafficking or other problems which children may encounter as they grow up is not an essential component of life skills education. The term 'life skills' refers to a set of skills that are considered important for young people to make their way in life. They include learning to negotiate, decision making, problem solving, critical thinking, communicating effectively, managing interpersonal relationships, resolving conflicts, being self-aware and empathetic towards others, and coping with emotions and stress.⁸² Experience shows already that participatory methods are helpful or even essential to teaching life skills⁸³ and it appeared from the materials seen by the evaluators that these were being introduced in the curriculum designed with TICW's support in Thailand.⁸⁴ Experience also suggests that peer-to-peer education is effective in teaching life skills, although it is sometimes perceived as a threat by teachers.

When children learn these skills of a largely non-academic nature, it is a good opportunity for them to acquire knowledge about situations which they may confront in the 'real world' outside the class room – including trafficking, the worst forms of child labour and the various inducements associated with both. The ILO evidently has a special interest in ensuring that

⁸² Isobel McConnan and Sarah Uppard, *Children Not Soldiers*, Save the Children UK, London, 2001.

⁸³ See: Child Rights Information Centre (Moldova). *Life skills education for prevention of trafficking in human beings: Evaluation report*. Chişinau, 2004.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

topics associated with the economic exploitation of children and adults are included, but it is equally desirable to include reference to other risks which adolescents grow up ill-equipped to cope with in a fast-changing world, particularly in societies experiencing rapid transition. These risks include HIV/AIDS, other sexually transmitted infections, and addiction to alcohol, cigarettes or other drugs. It is possible that all these topics were covered in the curriculum which the evaluators saw. To be sure that this is the case, it would be sensible to ensure that the curriculum adopted at district level in Chiang Rai Province in northern Thailand is checked by a suitably qualified life skills expert.

The evaluators were surprised that as many as five schools in the same province in Thailand had been asked to design separate curriculum and teaching materials, when no resources were reported to be devoted to developing life skills in other project countries. In principle it would be just as important to introduce life skills into the curriculum in other areas (of other countries) from which young people have been trafficked (although possibly the likelihood of the education authorities agreeing to this may be less in other countries). In particular, the somewhat similar circumstances in areas in which TICW is active in southwest Yunnan, where there are similar minorities to Thailand (with the crucial difference that they are not denied citizenship) suggest that it would be appropriate to develop the teaching of life skills there. The evaluation team understood that, although the TICW project was not undertaking this, the SCREAM package is being promoted in parts of Yunnan and includes life skills.

8.3.5.3 Information about trafficking made available to children and young adults, including 'study visits' to cities for young village dwellers

At the international level, significant lessons have already been learned about initiatives to raise the awareness of young people about trafficking before they leave home or before they migrate abroad.⁸⁵ These highlight the need to measure the impact of all efforts to increase awareness, as well as to explore novel awareness raising activities which go beyond simply passing knowledge to young people. In this context, the 'study visits' in Yunnan appear to represent a novel method and one whose impact should be assessed in greater detail.

8.4 Replicability

8.4.1 The learning process within IPEC

Despite the DED Guidelines on good practice and the existence of a good practices database, replication to a wider level in IPEC seems to the evaluators to occur mainly through an informal means rather than a formal process. It seemed to the evaluators to involve desk officers picking up on good practices and sharing information about them through networks (within IPEC) and targeting them specifically to those who may find them useful. It also relies on staff moving from one project and one region of the world to another and transferring technical expertise as they move. There are also occasional IPEC meetings at which experiences are exchanged, such as a global meeting on trafficking in 2004, where CTAs in charge of IPEC projects concerning trafficking (in persons or specifically in

⁸⁵ See: (1) Ruth Rosenberg, Sebastian Lăzăroiu and Elena Tyuryukanova, Best Practices for Programming to Prevent Trafficking in Human Beings in Europe and Eurasia, Development Alternatives Inc for USAID, September 2004 (which can be downloaded at: <http://www.vitalvoices.org/files/docs/Prevention%20assessment%20Report-formatted%20CAS1.pdf>); and (2) Mike Dottridge, Action to Prevent Child Trafficking in South Eastern Europe. A Preliminary Assessment, UNICEF and Terre des Hommes 2006, 2006.

children) were able to share and learn experiences, as well as sharing through the IPEC's intranet, publications issued by individual projects, and annual publications which profile particular activities.

These informal mechanisms are perfectly acceptable, but should evidently be based on a more formal system for assessing what techniques deserve replication and for disseminating information on good practice in a systematic way.

The Thematic Product Lines and Networking Unit at IPEC's headquarters in Geneva has the function of identifying learning points from field experience and disseminating these more widely. The evaluators queried whether this reliance on informal processes was efficient and whether in fact within IPEC and even within TICW itself, staff were not simply reinventing the wheel again and again. IPEC staff felt that a more formal process would not work as there are some 170 projects and thousands of Action Programmes; and that the mechanisms were there for linkages to be made by desk and thematic sections at IPEC's headquarters in Geneva. However, the evaluators feel there is a serious concern about duplication and waste of resources. Even within the TICW project itself they were surprised to see how little sharing and replication takes place when some of the projects are running similar activities. 'Life skills' is a classic example with modules apparently being developed with TICW support from scratch in different countries when the concept and materials could be developed centrally within the project (not necessarily in Bangkok, but with one project site acting as pilot project for the rest) and only requiring a little local adaptation. Needless to say, as the concept of 'life skills' has become popular in recent years, there is now a great deal of experience outside the TICW project and ILO which could also be used. While some duplication of life skills materials could be justified on the basis that they need developing at local level in order to promote local 'ownership', the evaluators were concerned that different parts of the TICW project were not paying sufficient attention to the lessons being learned in other parts of the project, notably on issues such as establishing revolving credit as a technique to prevent human trafficking.

8.4.1.1 Increasing the exchange of information about experiences within the TICW project

Direct contact between the TICW staff in one country with those in other countries seems rather limited in the case of Cambodia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam, with the sub-regional office acting as a funnel for sharing information and experiences. This lack of direct contact with others is regrettable in some ways and seems to have inhibited the sharing of experiences and learning within the project. Publications seem to have been the main medium of exchanging experience but hands-on visits, dialogue and discussions have been limited. The national project officer in Cambodia, for example, has only visited China and Thailand once despite having worked on the project for six years. Sub-regional meetings are the main forum for such exchanges. Again there are clear limitations in terms of budget and time but better ways need to be found to facilitate inter-country learning within the project to maximise efficiency, learning and to avoid duplication and replication of mistakes.

8.4.2 Lessons learnt with regard to 'process'

This section examines lessons which are probably not appropriate to be mentioned in a TICW or ILO publication but which are nevertheless important for IPEC and the ILO to identify explicitly and learn from.

8.4.2.1 Was ‘provincial level’ a key entry point?

In four of the five TICW countries (all except Lao PDR), the project has focused specifically on mobilizing officials involved in provincial or local level government and has succeeded in doing so. This raises the question of whether it is more effective to start by influencing government officials at provincial or local level, rather than at national level. The evidence collected by the evaluators does not suggest that this is so. The scale of China makes it a special case, where it was fortuitous that the ILO’s preoccupation with a sub-region neighbouring Yunnan led it to concentrate on influencing officials at provincial level before turning to national level. It might well have been more challenging to have started at national level in China, but the scale and circumstances of the country mean that the experience there cannot be used to draw conclusions about the level of ‘entry point’ appropriate elsewhere.

In Thailand a high level of commitment by government officials at provincial and district was secured in Phayao, a relatively small and poor province with a two-decade long history of girls and women migrating to earn money in prostitution elsewhere. The same level of commitment has not been achieved in neighbouring Chiang Mai province, where the authorities have numerous other preoccupations. Although the evidence available about mobilizing government officials in areas of demand in Thailand is much less substantial, the evaluators were told by TICW staff that it was easier to mobilize government staff at provincial level if they were given the opportunity to decide what action to take (to prevent migrant workers and their families from being abused) themselves, rather than being given instructions from national level.

In Viet Nam government officials in Thanh Hoa, the province visited, appeared highly committed to supporting the action taken by the TICW project to prevent women and children from migrating within Viet Nam in circumstances which might lead to them being abused. This meant that significant achievements could be made at provincial level while obstacles were still being overcome at national level. Similarly, in Cambodia it was possible to make progress initiating action at provincial level (in Prey Veng), on account of the enthusiasm of the Governor and other officials, while there were obstacles at national level due to the different political allegiances of different ministries.

In the circumstances where either the Ministry of Labour at national level or the Government more generally is difficult to mobilize, it may well be appropriate to try provincial or local level government as an entry point for efforts to stop human trafficking and related forms of exploitation, such as child labour. However, for this to be an effective entry point, it has to be possible either to influence the national level authorities subsequently or to replicate the experience in a significant number of other provincial governments. When provincial or local level government proves an effective entry point, therefore, it is important to take note explicitly of what factors have enabled the ILO to make progress and whether these can be replicated (and how) or whether they arise purely by chance.

8.4.2.2 Have (national) Women’s Federations been a key entry point?

In both China (Yunnan) and Viet Nam, the women’s federations have proved effective partners and proved vital (in China) or very important (in Viet Nam) in organizing various forms of direct assistance at local level. The structure of such federations in these and other socialist countries meant that once a commitment was made at national level by officials in the Women’s Federation to cooperate with the ILO in action to stop trafficking, branches and officials of the same federation could be mobilized at provincial and local level relatively

easily. In contrast, in a country such as Thailand, even if an authority at national level demonstrated a high level of commitment to gender equality and action to stop trafficking in women and girls, no equivalent structure exists to mobilize action at provincial, local or community level.

In relation to any issues with a significant gender dimension, the ILO may be able to make more rapid progress in the context of a project by developing good working relations with the national Women's Federation. However, it seems likely that there are limits to the progress achievable without also establishing good working relations with other government ministries (although in theory this does not have to be the Ministry of Labour). It seems likely that progress at provincial and local level can be achieved fast and effectively by working with the Women's Federation (as in the case of Yunnan and Viet Nam), whereas the same progress may not be achieved at national level without investing more heavily in relationships with other government ministries and agencies.

The high level of effectiveness of the Yunnan Provincial Steering Committee appears to depend in part on the fact that there are solid relations between the Provincial Women's Federation and the police (Public Security), as Public Security is a key stakeholder both as far as the issue of trafficking is concerned and concerning efforts to avoid social unrest resulting from current patterns of rapid migration. In the absence of such good relations, the Women's Federation might be unable to ensure such good coordination with the police and other key stakeholders.

8.5 Strengths and weaknesses of project interventions which are relevant to future anti-trafficking interventions

8.5.1 Meeting challenges and taking advantage of new opportunities

There have been major developments since the beginning of 2004 which have affected the TICW project and the environment in which it is working. It has adapted to the COMMIT process and taken advantage of it to assert the voice of some of its stakeholders (Ministries of Labour and social partners at the September 2005 SURAC meeting and children, in their capacity as a key group of supposed beneficiaries of anti-trafficking initiatives, at the Mekong Children's Forum in September 2004). However, the ILO's formal position with respect to Myanmar has put the TICW project at a disadvantage and prevented it from using the COMMIT process to advocate the interests of the project's stakeholders and beneficiaries as much as it would have been able to do in the absence of the ILO resolution of the 87th Session (June 1999) of the International Labour Conference on the widespread use of forced labour in Myanmar based on which Myanmar should cease to benefit from any technical cooperation or assistance from the ILO until such time as it has implemented the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry) or if Myanmar had not been part in the COMMIT process.

8.5.2 Developing direct assistance strategies to discourage 'demand' (for trafficked persons)

Although there has been progress in developing activities to prevent migrants from being subjected to abuse in destination areas, this part of the project does not appear to have made enough progress to achieve the project's objectives. The lack of progress is noticeable both in relation to direct assistance activities and in relation to other activities in destination areas, such as capacity building, knowledge and awareness raising. Thailand represents the critical

country for the project in this regard and progress has been noticeably slow there. The result is that not enough experience has been acquired from direct assistance activities in destinations to draw conclusions about good practice yet or to mainstream the conclusions at policy level.

One possible reason for the lack of progress is that the project has set out to reduce ‘demand’, rather than, more simply, to develop systems for protecting migrants and reducing the likelihood that they will be subjected to abuse.

Successful activities in destination areas resemble activities whose effectiveness has been tested elsewhere in the past, such as social centres for young women migrants (the ‘Women’s Homes’ in cities in China) and the drop-in centres set up for migrants and the children of migrant workers in Thailand.

Among the activities designed more specifically to reduce ‘demand’ are those to influence employers in Sihanoukville, (Cambodia), and those to reduce donations to child beggars in Bangkok. These represent a first step as far as influencing ‘demand’ in concerned. Elsewhere, although the project has tried to influence employers in Kunming (China), for example, it seems to have run into the typical obstacle in such initiatives: employers either do not acknowledge that the people they employ could be victims of trafficking (and consequently are not interested in hearing about the measure to protect their workers), or actually do not belong to the category of employers who employ victims of trafficking (for example, because formal sector employers have been contacted, through formal employer organizations, rather than informal sector employers or employers in the particular employment sectors believed to involve trafficked workers).

In Thailand the project expects to break through this and related barriers by increasing the knowledge base about cases of exploitation in four sectors of employment: i.e. having more evidence of trafficking or exploitation to present to employers and labour department officials who harbour similar doubts about whether further measures are needed to protect migrant workers. While the extra evidence should certainly help the project know where the worst cases of abuse are occurring and who can take action to prevent it, it may well be an illusion to suggest that abuse can be prevented by ‘reducing demand’, except in the rare cases where it looks feasible to influence the final end users of the services or products of individuals who have been trafficked. Evidently certain other activities which are underway can help reduce demand, such as the establishment of complaints mechanisms, bringing about policy changes which result in better labour monitoring and ensuring labour laws are enforced.

8.5.3 Knowledge Base

Although the project has undertaken interesting research, there is still a startling lack of quantitative data about the patterns of abuse which the project aims to prevent. It consequently appears virtually impossible to measure whether the project is making progress and whether rates of trafficking are increasing or decreasing throughout the region. The TICW project should not be responsible by itself for improving the quality of data available about patterns of trafficking in the GMS, it is important that by 2008 it should leave clear data about the scale of the problem which remains to be resolved.

8.5.4 Advocacy and Mobilization

The levels of information available in English from the TICW project's web-site (<http://www.childtrafficking.net/>) appeared excellent. Evidently the web-site privileges people who understand English and, as such, might be read by policy-makers in international organizations active in the GMS, but is less likely to be read by others in the region. Nevertheless, some materials in national languages can already be downloaded from the site in national languages. There is obviously a need to be very selective in deciding what to translate, but also a broad need to avoid appearing to only be targeting people who understand English. In view of the rapid growth in interest in trafficking issues in China, it would be appropriate for the Communications Officer in Bangkok to liaise closely with the All China Women's Federation (in its capacity as the partner of the CP-TING project in China, running the CP-TING web-site in Chinese) when assessing what materials deserve to be translated into Mandarin Chinese.

The communications work initiated from the sub-regional office appeared very positive – innovative, dynamic and energetic, and exciting. This will be important to maintain for the rest of the project's duration in order to allow it to broadcast its messages as widely as possible.

At the same time, the project needs to develop its advocacy expertise as far as influencing key policy-makers who are not committed to the project's objectives and whose positions appear to be holding up progress (notably in Viet Nam, but also in Thailand as far as foreign migrant workers are concerned). The evaluators understood from interviews with different ILO and IPEC staff that project staff are unsure of the extent to which they are entitled to deploy advocacy initiatives of its own in order to communicate its concerns to government officials and to achieve its objectives. This needs to be clarified.

In Viet Nam and Thailand, and possibly in other GMS countries, the TICW project should subsequently develop an advocacy strategy of its own, involving both sub-regional TICW staff and those running the relevant national programme.

8.5.4.1 Mobilizing government officials to take action to prevent trafficking—both in areas of recruitment and areas of exploitation

The project has proved very successful in some areas at persuading government officials to take action to prevent trafficking, while in others it has been much less successful.

In China the commitment of the authorities both at provincial level (in Yunnan) and at national level to preventing social unrest which might result from the abuse of internal migrants within China means that there has been a high level of commitment since Phase 1 of the TICW Project to taking action to prevent what the authorities and others call 'blind migration'. Government commitment in Lao PDR is also strong. In contrast, there is little evidence that authorities at national level in Viet Nam have embraced the notion that women and children are being trafficked for purposes other than sexual exploitation. The Director of DSEP's comments at the 2005 SURAC Conference suggest he saw cases of trafficking uniquely in terms of Vietnamese women and girls being involved in prostitution or subjected to forced marriage in other countries, rather than recognizing that internal migrants within Viet Nam were being subjected to the forms of exploitation associated with trafficking and that these include economic exploitation as well as sexual exploitation. In Cambodia, the government has the interest but lacks the resources to see through its commitment.

In several countries the project has been effective at persuading officials at provincial level to initiate action to prevent trafficking, while officials at national level have still been reticent. Similarly, working with the Women's Federations in China and Viet Nam proved a successful entry point. These successes and the possibility of replicating them are the subject of comments in 8.4.2.2.above.

8.5.4.2 Mobilizing the social partners (employers' and workers' organizations)

In contrast to Phase 1 of the TICW project, in which there was no explicit intention to mobilize the ILO's social partners (employers' and workers' organizations), Phase 2 set out to involve the social partners. This has proved relatively successful at sub-regional level, in the context of the 2005 SURAC conference, but much less successful at national and local level.

Efforts to mobilize employers' organizations are also reported to have been more successful than efforts to mobilize trade unions.

Undoubtedly the main reason for this is that both employers' and workers' organizations (trade unions) are more motivated to take up issues which are of direct concern to their own members than other issues which they consider extraneous. The nature of the organizations in the five countries varies from country to country, but in general the trade unions do not represent foreign migrant workers or internal migrants employed in the informal sector and employers' organizations do not believe that any of their members are involved in trafficking people or employing victims of forced labour. In both cases, it has reportedly been easier to provoke interest and mobilize social partners when the TICW project has contacted sector specific workers' or employers' organizations (i.e. trade unions representing people working in a particular economic sector and employers focusing on a single industry or sector) than when it has tried to mobilize national level trade union centres or employers' federations. This suggests that efforts to mobilize social partners should be focused on areas of 'demand' where trafficked workers are being exploited and should give priority to contacting trade unions and employers' organizations which are directly linked to the economic sectors where trafficked workers are found.

However, an additional reason for employers' and workers' organization proving difficult to mobilize or slow to react is that they do not consider themselves stakeholders—for they have been urged to take action without being offered money to organize activities within the framework of the TICW project. Evidently, when social partners have managed an Action Programme (for example, in the case of the Kunming City Private Economy Association), they have become more active. However, this has not guaranteed an automatic 'buy-in' to the project, for the Kunming employers' project manager reported that employers regularly dismissed the efforts to get them involved, saying that they did not and would not employ workers who had been trafficked.

In Cambodia and Lao PDR, employers and workers representatives are part of the national steering committees which oversee the project. In both countries, workers organizations appear more engaged than in Thailand. In Cambodia, the Cambodian Union Federation (CUF) is very active and was already interested in the trafficking issue prior to its involvement with TICW and has been concerned with ensuring the protection of female migrant workers to Malaysia. It was also engaged in its own awareness raising activities independently of the project, on the dangers of trafficking and hopes that through its membership it can reach out to vulnerable groups by making training available to neighbours

and communities and not merely its own members. The IPEC support to the timebound programme (to eliminate the worst forms of child labour) in Cambodia is carrying out an Action Programme with a trade union called PACT against child labour. In Lao PDR also, union members testified to supporting awareness-raising among workers and to taking an active interest in the project.

Securing the engagement of employers in a meaningful way (aside from engaging them in national steering committees) has been more of a challenge in Cambodia and Lao PDR. In Cambodia, the project is gearing training activities at employers in destination areas. While this is welcome by those who attend, there is a concern that the project is missing the worst offenders amongst the employers. The government recognizes TICW's mobilization of the tripartite structure in Cambodia as a positive and unique contribution but queries whether employer participation still remained too weak overall. The evaluator was unable to meet the main employer and worker representatives: more junior staff from the employers association, Cambodian Federation of Employers and Business Associations (CAMFEBA) indicated their interest but felt they lacked the resources to do any more. Unless TICW can find a strategic interest for employers in engaging with this issue, it will need do more to plough in resources to persuade them to take it up, through more mini or action programmes e.g. Lao PDR employers' representative says they feel they need training in the same way as unions.

Finding the right entry point for social partners

There remains a tension in all places that while the ILO's social partners should in principle be involved in project activities, the rationale for involving them in initiatives to prevent human trafficking or their interest in the project is not obvious, either to project staff or to the social partners themselves; e.g. in Cambodia, the project has been more successful in mobilizing workers and employers in destination areas, in comparison to sending areas where the relevance of the project to either employers' or workers' organizations is evidently not apparent. In Lao PDR too, there is no employers' organization involved in the project below central level and trade unions only operate at provincial and district level. Evidently, it is difficult to expect such organizations to be involved in project activities in rural areas, where all or most of their activities are situated in towns.

The challenges and limitations to mobilizing employers and workers are obvious, even though it is fundamental in the ILO's approach to the world of work that it should involve them in its activities and should promote their role and capacity to influence their government's policies with respect to all aspects of the world of work. However, the evaluators found that many TICW staff seemed to mechanically reach to involve these partners and did not have a good political understanding of who all the different actors are and what their interests might be. The project could benefit from a clearer strategic analysis of the different employers'/workers' organizations and the politics of engaging them, who should be involved, who should not be involved, and how to go about this. In most countries IPEC staff have probably already undertaken this analysis, but it is possible that they too have not found appropriate ways of mobilizing the social partners in initiatives to stop child labour, and that the TICW project is affected by this. Overall, there is a need for increasing training for TICW staff as some, coming from very different organizations (such as NGOs), may lack knowledge and experience in labour issues.

For instance, in Cambodia, external actors were able to put forward ideas about what needed to be done. For example a trade union (believed to be called CUF) has forged links with a Malaysian trade union to persuade them to allow migrant workers from Cambodia to become members of the Malaysian union and the Government of Cambodia was reported to be

considering ways of reaching employers more effectively by involving higher level officials such as governors. In Lao PDR, there was some mention of a potential role for employers' organizations in providing training to their members and urging them to offer jobs to returnees. While these are positive suggestions and the project in some cases has no doubt facilitated such ideas by providing a platform, one might expect TICW staff themselves to be well-versed enough to be able to stimulate such ideas themselves.

8.5.4.3 Mobilizing the project's intended beneficiaries—women and children

The project made a significant breakthrough in 2004 with the organization of the Mekong Children's Forum, giving children who had been exploited⁸⁶ or were considered to be at risk of being exploited a voice and an opportunity to influence government officials attending a key COMMIT conference. The project is also working closely with women's organizations as partners in two of the five countries. However, while the women's federations in China and Viet Nam represent women in general, this does not mean that they specifically represent women and girls who have been trafficked or who are at disproportionately high risk of being trafficked. The voice of this key group of the TICW project's intended beneficiaries has not yet been well articulated within the project. While the solution is certainly not to try and replicate the Mekong Children's Forum for women in general or specifically for women in danger of being trafficked, some of the lessons on participation from the TICW's December 2005 training (concerning child participation) could be applied (such as the three mentioned earlier: "involvement in the decision making and planning process", "involvement in activities" and "involvement in the monitoring and evaluation process"), making specific efforts to promote the participation of young women who share the characteristics of those who have already been trafficked..

8.6 Lessons learnt concerning relationships with international agencies and national organizations involved in anti-trafficking and related activities

Since the beginning of Phase 2 the management of the TICW project has gone to obvious efforts to build a good working relationship with the UNIAP (repairing the poor relations which were a feature of Phase 1) and to coordinate the activities of the project with other inter-governmental organizations and international NGOs involved in anti-trafficking activities in South East Asia. Nevertheless, in relation to trafficking, separate international organizations have distinct priorities, many preferring to focus on cases of trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation rather than cases involving other forms of exploitation and many concentrating on helping trafficked individuals to recover rather than on prevention.

In theory this could result in an efficient division of labour, but there did not seem to the evaluators to be an effective mechanism for ensuring this is the case, particularly as the UNIAP has evolved from being a coordination mechanism to being the COMMIT secretariat.

The TICW project has developed an effective partnership with SCUK which the project could use to develop the participation of children in its activities still further. The fact that this relationship resulted from pressure exerted by the donor (DfID) is a significant lesson – that donor pressure can be appropriate and useful in imposing a more rational division of labour (and cooperation) than occurs otherwise. This is probably not a lesson which any implementing agency wants to hear, but it is an important one to consider all the same.

⁸⁶ I.e. children who had been or were still involved in child labour, as well as some who had been trafficked.

At national level, in most countries there is still an uneasy coordination between the TICW project and its leading partner and the country's lead agency with responsibility for coordinating or managing anti-trafficking initiatives. In order to mainstream its experience as widely as possible and to ensure that its partners' activities are sustained beyond the end of the project, it appears to be essential for the TICW project to use its influence to improve these relations over the coming two years and to ensure that each country has one effective mechanism for coordinating anti-trafficking efforts.

8.7 TICW's relationship with DFID

The evaluators understood that the relations between the TICW project and DfID are centered around the project's six-monthly technical progress reports, involving periodic meetings between the DfID representative for South East Asia and the project's CTA.

DfID has reportedly expressed concern that the project's six-monthly technical progress reports are structured too formally according to a format imposed by the IPEC office in Geneva and that these reports do not communicate clearly enough what the overall impact of the project is. This is not surprising, as the project's indicators (which were agreed by DfID in the initial project document) do not include any measurements of whether levels of trafficking are increasing or decreasing and what effects, if any, are due to the TICW project. It seemed likely that, in expressing concern about IPEC's report format, DfID was in fact communicating a worry about something rather more fundamental—the lack of monitoring or reporting in relation to the project's development goal—that is the joint responsibility of both DfID and the ILO.

DfID is also reported to have expressed concern that the reporting requirements for the project's partners are too onerous. The evaluators found some evidence for this, but also concluded that a rigorous system for reporting and accountability is advantageous.

The evaluators were told that DfID had considerable influence on IPEC in the late 1990s on the issue of participation and hope that DfID's representative in Bangkok will continue to press the project to ensure that the project's beneficiaries participate more fully in the project, particularly in the project's processes for learning which preventive techniques have been effective.

9 Conclusions and Recommendations

Reviewing the recommendations made in 2002 and 2003 as part of the mid-term and final evaluations of phase 1, the evaluation team noted that many of their recommendations in 2006 address much the same issues. While it is clear that substantial efforts have been made already to address the recommendations made in 2002 and 2003, in the cases of participation and lesson learning the recommendations made in the Phase 1 Final Evaluation are still pertinent and are reflected in the recommendations below.⁸⁷

The first nine recommendations are either general in nature or address issues at the project's sub-regional level. The final five recommendations focus on each of the country's and are addressed at those responsible for running the project in each of the countries.

9.1 Coherence, focus and priorities

When TICW staff explained their role in the project to the evaluators, they regularly described the project as "complicated". In effect, they found it difficult 'to see the wood for the trees' (i.e. not to lose sight of the goal they were trying to achieve).

It is true that the project is complicated. It has four inter-related objectives designed to produce 12 outputs by means of 64 separate activities, all implemented in five countries in which both trafficking patterns and many other conditions are different. The result, of course, is that the project is unwieldy. This reduces the likelihood that the project will achieve its objectives and makes it difficult for a single person to manage the project. In effect, there is too much going on. The simple idea in 2003 that the project could spend two or three years trying out different direct assistance activities and then concentrate on mainstreaming these has run into complications and obstacles.

The evaluators found islands of good work within the project, but were concerned that not enough of its activities were making a clear contribution (i.e. one for which the evidence is available to demonstrate its contribution) to achieving the project's objectives. Like the project's managers, the evaluation team felt torn between encouraging the project to concentrate on consolidating its work (already substantial) in sending areas and putting more emphasis on direct assistance activities in receiving areas. While it was apparent to the evaluators that the activities in receiving areas were significantly less developed, they nevertheless concluded that the project's most important 'value added' is precisely in receiving areas where few or no other organizations are engaging in efforts to prevent trafficking and to prevent the exploitation associated with trafficking. This led them to the conclusions that the strategic priority should be to develop direct assistance efforts in receiving areas further, and to cut back on preventive initiatives in sending areas which are already supported by other agencies (such as alternative livelihoods and life skill education).

Recommendation 1: The project needs to consolidate its activities and focus its efforts on fewer initiatives. In principle at this stage of the project, if faced with a choice between giving priority to developing further initiatives, even imaginative ones, or ensuring that its existing initiatives achieve their objectives, it should give priority to the latter. However, the special 'value added' of the TICW project means that, if faced with a choice between

⁸⁷ Recommendations 2 (Further Develop Participation) and 11 (Strengthen Sharing of Lesson Learning with IPEC and ILO).

consolidating preventive efforts in sending areas and continuing to invest in new (and relatively untested) preventive techniques in receiving areas, the priority is to test techniques in receiving areas more fully. In both cases even more priority should be given to learning lessons about what works and should be replicated.

9.2 Participation

One of the recommendations of the Phase 1 Final Evaluation suggested that more attention should be given to participatory approaches in general.⁸⁸ However, it is the lack of explicit efforts to ensure the participation of the project's beneficiaries that concerned the evaluators—particularly in the design of project activities and also in their evaluation and modification. The project should differentiate clearly between the need to promote the participation of stakeholders and the modalities for ensuring this and those concerning the project's intended beneficiaries. *Recommendation 2: The management of the project at sub-regional level (CTA and others) should clarify what standards for participation by the project's intended beneficiaries are the minimum acceptable to the project in the context of Action Programmes and other actions.*

9.2.1 Participation at the design stage

One way of encouraging the participation of children and the project's other beneficiaries within the TICW project during its final two years would be to require every proposal for an Action Programme or Mini-Programme to contain a statement explaining how the views of the programme's intended beneficiaries (whether children or young adults) have been sought and taken into account in the course of the design of the programme. This information could also be reflected in the section on "Action Programme Design and Implementation" which is included in the project's six-monthly Technical Progress Reports. While the evaluators do not regard it as feasible for the project's intended beneficiaries to participate actively in designing initiatives, they expect, at a minimum, to see evidence that experience of individuals who have been trafficked in the past has been consulted and taken into account and that, in some cases at least, such individuals have been consulted about how they consider a proposed preventive initiative would have impacted on them (and whether it would have helped stop them being trafficked).

9.2.2 Participatory Monitoring Tools

The evaluators are concerned that the complexity of the PM tools developed by the project are a reason why they are not being used and why the project's beneficiaries are not being involved sufficiently in the monitoring or evaluation of project activities. Despite the significant investment made in the development of the PM tools and in training staff how to use them, the project's management should consider simplifying them further and supplementing them with some other participatory monitoring and evaluation methods which would be simpler to use. While quantitative techniques are important, the project's managers should also consider making greater use of qualitative techniques (in-depth interviews with a small number of beneficiaries), such as some tracer studies.

⁸⁸ "Overall, the project could give more attention to ensuring that participatory approaches, to underpin methods and tools, are understood and encouraged throughout all project interventions, and right through the development process".

9.3 Knowledge base – improving knowledge of the characteristics of individuals who are disproportionately at risk of being trafficked (and of their households)

Recommendation 3: The project should ensure it has an adequate understanding of the characteristics of the children and young women who are more likely to be trafficked than others their own age (i.e. at disproportionately high risk of being trafficked) in order to target its preventive activities at such individuals in both sending and receiving areas. It could go about this by commissioning an expert to identify the factors which put some people at disproportionately higher risk than others of being trafficked. It would subsequently be possible (and desirable) to assess the impact of the project’s activities on such individuals and on the factors which put them at disproportionately high risk.

9.4 Advocacy

Recommendation 4: The project should develop explicit advocacy strategies for each country, in particular for countries where it has encountered difficulties with implementing activities due to the views of specific officials or departments (either due to a lack of understanding of the project’s objectives or to their disagreement with them).

The evaluators understood from interviews with different ILO and IPEC staff that the project staff are unsure of the extent to which they are entitled to deploy advocacy initiatives themselves in order to communicate their concerns to government officials and to achieve the project’s objectives. This needs to be clarified by the CTA and ILO Sub-Regional Office, in the context of the development of country-specific advocacy strategies.

The project’s Communications Officer could be given responsibility for overseeing the development of relevant advocacy strategies and securing the commitment of TICW (and relevant other IPEC or ILO) staff to the techniques agreed.

On the whole, the evaluators did not come across sufficient evidence about the impact of the project’s awareness raising activities to assess whether these should be replicated or required modification.⁸⁹ Rather than trying to rethink what indicators would give meaningful information about the project’s awareness raising activities, it would be useful if the project’s managers were to consult with others (outside the project) to see whether more meaningful targets, indicators and means of verification have been developed elsewhere and could be applied to the TICW project in measuring the impact of awareness raising activities. This would be useful not simply for the TICW project and its donor, but for a wide range of other anti-trafficking projects around the world.

9.5 Direct Assistance

Recommendation 5: Although the Project Document for Phase 2 stipulates that direct assistance activities should come to an end half way through the project (i.e. in early 2006), the evaluators strongly advise that they be continued. This is particularly vital as far as direct assistance activities in destination areas are concerned, where none has been running for long enough to prove its worth (and it is consequently impossible to know whether the methods used are appropriate to mainstream at policy level).

⁸⁹ There were some exceptions, for example in the case of the research in Cambodia into the reactions of television audiences which watched ‘The Taste of Life’.

However, it is also important as far as direct assistance activities in migrants' areas of origin are concerned. Although some of these have been running since Phase 1, there is still a lack of adequate evidence about their impact and consequently not enough information on which to base decisions about which activities (or combinations of activities) are appropriate to replicate elsewhere or to mainstream at policy level. In this case, a concerted effort should be made to learn from the project's experiences so far, by subjecting the direct assistance activities in areas of origin to rigorous comparative analysis (see sections 8.6 and 8.7).

9.6 Impact assessment

As noted previously, the evaluators are concerned that not enough effort has been made to measure the impact of the project's activities on its intended beneficiaries, either in general or specifically in terms of the extent to which they have reduced the likelihood that vulnerable individuals will be trafficked.

As noted in section 4.2, the evaluation team feels that the TICW project, together with other projects and programmes operating in the GMS sub-region that share the objective of stopping human trafficking (or reducing the number of people being trafficked), ought to be developing ways of measuring whether the numbers being trafficked are reducing or the abuse inflicted on migrants is decreasing, and that donors should be encouraging them to do so. They recognize that it would be unrealistic to expect the TICW project to do this without the cooperation of other organizations, such as the UNIAP, and that it would be unrealistic to propose that, half way through Phase 2, the TICW project should embark on collecting this information by itself. .

As far as the TICW project is concerned, the evaluation team concluded that some tracking of samples of beneficiaries would be useful beyond the expected life of the TICW project (i.e. 2008) in order to assess the impact of the project's preventive activities over the longer term. While this might be complicated to organize once the project's funding comes to an end, it would be invaluable in enabling IPEC and others to draw firmer conclusions about what prevention activities work and which do not. It would be appropriate to pursue the efforts reportedly started in 2005 to conduct impact assessments at the level of direct beneficiaries, using either tracer studies or other similar techniques. However, the limited scope of such studies and the difficulty of initiating them months or even years after 'beneficiaries' have been affected by project activities makes it sensible to conduct a limited number of tracer studies as pilot exercises, rather than to expect to monitor the impact of the entire project through such studies.

Recommendation 6(a): The evaluators recommend that the donor should consider making some additional funding available to support such tracking between 2007 and 2009.

The difficulties in assessing the project's impact are due in part to the lack of attention given to explicitly identifying the reasons why some individuals are trafficked and others are not (i.e. why certain individuals are particularly vulnerable to being trafficked). The lack of focus on individuals makes it difficult to assess the project's impact on individuals who might otherwise have been trafficked: this is addressed by Recommendation 3.

Recommendation 6(b): With respect to current and future direct assistance activities, evidence should be collected systematically about the effects (i.e. impact) of the activities, so that these can be subjected to comparative analysis (between similar activities in a single country and in different countries). In the specific cases of direct assistance to promote

alternative livelihoods in rural areas (whether by making credit available or training), what is needed is a subtle analysis which traces the myriad of effects of the direct assistance on trafficking, general socio-economic conditions and individual behaviour.

9.7 The identification of ‘good practice’

The project has accumulated a wealth of experience which has not been adequately analysed. While much effort has been put into identifying ‘good practice’, this has generally involved describing a series of interesting initiatives, but not subjecting them to any comparative analysis to draw conclusions from the sum total of the project’s experience, for example on micro-credit, direct assistance in general or building the capacity of government institutions.

This inadequacy may be due in part to the project’s structure: the two programme officers based in Bangkok have responsibility for checking the quality of Action Programmes and other activities proposed by national project coordinators, but do not appear to have any responsibility for analysing or comparing the effects of the programmes and activities. For the remainder of the project it may be appropriate to change their role.

Recommendation 7(a): It is a priority to consolidate the lessons being learnt from initiatives which are similar but based in different countries and to subject these to a rigorous comparative analysis.

Recommendation 7(b): The project should introduce a system of quality assurance into its learning processes, such a peer review method for identifying ‘good practice’. The peer review method is commonly used by academics (when considering the publication of research results) and also by various professionals commenting on the technical quality of a wide range of initiatives. It often involves ‘peers’ from a range of competing institutions. The peer review process is consequently based on high professional standards, including respect for the confidentiality of any information which is reviewed. Any peer review of efforts to prevent trafficking should involve individuals who have some established expertise in relation to the issue of human trafficking (or, when they are relevant as outcomes of trafficking, forced labour or child labour), not just from IPEC or the ILO, or even its tripartite constituencies, but from other governmental, inter-governmental, or non-governmental agencies and from academic institutions. It would consequently not be appropriate simply to involve individuals who represent particular institutional interests either within the ILO or in other organizations: they should have technical expertise in relation to the techniques which they are asked to give comments on.

Furthermore, when seeking to identify an anti-trafficking measure as ‘good practice’, those involved should check explicitly that the measure concerned is not having any adverse effects on the very people it is supposed to benefit or others closely connected with them.

The evaluators recommend that the TICW project (and IPEC more broadly) should avoid using the phrase ‘emerging good practice’ as a generic label for practices which have not yet been subjected to any rigorous test.

9.8 The project’s management

The evaluators consider it absolutely vital for the project’s managers (i.e. the CTA and anyone else in a managerial role at sub-regional level) to be able to provide leadership and to focus attention on the project’s strategy in individual countries, as well as at sub-regional

level. This means that, without ‘micro-managing’ the project from Bangkok, there should be more visits to each country and more time spent by the project’s managers checking that the strategies chosen at national level are logical (i.e. conform to the project’s programme logic), and helping them resolve problems which have come up within their national programme.

Checking the strategies chosen at national level means engaging national project coordinators and Action Programme implementing partners in ongoing dialogue, not to undermine their confidence, but to question the reasons behind decisions on strategy and to ensure that these are logical (i.e. that they conform to the project’s programme logic and are consequently likely to contribute to achieving the project’s objectives). The role could also include checking whether adequate efforts are being made to ensure the participation of the project’s intended beneficiaries and whether adequate evidence is being collected about the impact of project activities to assess whether they are appropriate to replicate.

The evaluators doubt whether the CTA can perform this role alone. They realise that during the initial stages of Phase 2 of the project, when numerous visits by Bangkok-based staff were required to the other four countries, it was appropriate to give two Programme Officers the responsibility for visiting the four countries. At this stage, all project proposals (for Action Programmes, etc.) evidently needed to go through a quality assurance process. However, for the remainder of the project it would be appropriate for a more senior manager to be involved, for the quality assurance process while a project is running is in many ways more difficult and requires stronger managerial, diplomatic and leadership skills.

Recommendation 8: The CTA should review the project’s management structure and consider appointing a senior manager with special responsibilities for quality assurance as far as the project activities in all of the five countries are concerned.

In addition, for the rest of the project its management needs to give high priority to ensuring that the project’s learning processes (in relation to ‘good practice’, as well as all the other lessons which can be learned from such a large and long project as TICW) are working well (see section 8.3 for further explanation on this point).

9.9 Staff training

Recommendation 9: The complexity and relative novelty of the issues with which the project is dealing mean that additional training is needed for new TICW staff at an early stage on issues related to trafficking, as well as on ILO structures and procedures.

In addition to understand the process of trafficking, it is important that training should give special attention to *understanding the causes of trafficking*. Evidently this has already been an important topic in training sessions for new staff. In the case of newly appointed national project coordinators, it would be appropriate for their training to involve at least one visit to another project country in order to observe how the project is being implemented.

The evaluators expect that extra knowledge about the causes of trafficking and the implementation of the project in other countries could increase the ability of new staff to give guidance to Action Programme partners.

It is also important that at least one TICW staff member in each country has a good understanding of the ILO’s tripartite structure and of the potential of the ILO’s social partners to take part in ILO activities in general and the TICW project activities in particular.

9.10 Recommendations concerning Cambodia

1. Efforts should be made to ensure that the training materials currently under development are:
 - user friendly
 - adaptable for use in wider contexts (in order to avoid the need for reinventing the wheel and creating new materials for training of different types of groups in different situations in the future)
2. Develop a clearer strategy for reaching employers based on both persuasion and enforcement.
3. TICW should review its approach to the national committee on trafficking and ask whether it is engaged enough with developments therein.
4. Carry out a training needs assessment to review gaps in government capacity.
5. Continue efforts to ensure that all Action Programme partners in all working areas, understand TICW's broader approach to trafficking issues.
6. Continue to explore a wider variety of options for raising issues through the mass media.
7. Knowledge base
 - Consider if and how the data and statistics collected through the child safe tourism campaign can be better amalgamated, validated and utilised.
 - Continue efforts to document labour exploitation in order to ensure the issue remains on the agenda.
8. Sustainability
 - sub-regional and country office need to start thinking about an exit strategy, to consider how the work of the project can be sustained, and how best it can order its relationships with government and refine its focus.
 - the project should actively assist the government in finding other donors able to support this work after TICW's departure.

9.11 Recommendations concerning China (Yunnan Province)

1. The TICW project should conduct further research in urban areas within Yunnan, using objective methods, to establish whether children are involve in worst forms of child labour or not.
2. Further research should be conducted among migrants at their destinations in Yunnan and elsewhere in China. In addition to any general survey this should collect more detailed qualitative information about the migrants' experiences, based on in-depth interviews with migrants in which the respondent's anonymity is ensured and in which the interviewers are trained to use objective methods.
3. It would still be appropriate to initiate new types of preventive action at community level in Yunnan (i.e. direct assistance) in order to find out what is most effective in

preventing emigrants being subjected to abuse (and to draw firmer conclusions from preventive actions which have already been tried: see '6' below).

4. In Yunnan, as in other countries involved in the project, it would be useful to probe further into the impact of the project's micro-credit and income-generating activities, in order to explore the links (of cause and effect) between increases in income in various categories of household and the prevention of trafficking.
5. Monitor what happens to a representative sample of the beneficiaries of the Spring Bud Programme for at least two years after they leave school, in order to ensure that the programme does not have unintended harmful side effects for the girls concerned.
6. The 'study tours' direct assistance programme in Yunnan should be repeated during the second half of Phase 2 in order to draw firm conclusions about its effectiveness as a technique to prevent trafficking, both directly (by warning adolescents of dangers) and indirectly (by developing their ideas for possible income-generating activities).
7. Whenever Action Programmes are designed in the future, care should be taken to ensure that they have adequate 'results indicators' (for measuring what changes have been brought about by the programme's activities) and not just adequate 'output indicators'.
8. TICW project managers should examine ways of maintaining the capacity of the project's management in Yunnan and ensure that the various methods and practices which it has tried out are measured against a suitably high 'quality assurance'.

9.12 Recommendations concerning Lao PDR

1. There needs to be better tracking of the effects of VDFs on migration patterns. This should be done in two ways:
 - more integration of such questions/issues into regular monitoring and a reporting back to ILO on these findings;
 - a special study on the socio-economic impacts of VDFs on communities. This should be a subtle analysis which traces the myriad of effects on trafficking, general socio-economic conditions and individual behaviour.
2. Targeting of interventions needs to be refined in order to more clearly focus on those vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation:
 - explore better targeting of at-risk groups through the VDFs (with the understanding that room for manoeuvre is limited given the design of the VDF)
 - seek to better target vocational training programmes. This may involve designing new types of activities of interest to vulnerable groups.
 - carry out an assessment of the needs and interests of children and young people at risk.
 - carry out a market analysis to see what new kinds of activities could be developed.
3. Share information/experiences on micro-finance initiatives with other organizations in Lao PDR, possibly by convening an inter-agency forum.

4. Ensure community-based awareness-raising activities are carried out in certain VDF project sites as a complement to the micro-finance work that is being carried out. TICW should either initiate such activities itself or encourage other agencies with expertise in community-based awareness-raising to work in the same project sites.
5. Ensure that Action Programme partners are fully conversant with ILO standards on child labour.

9.13 Recommendations concerning Thailand

1. Efforts in sending areas should focus on taking advantage of the provincial level MoUs that have been signed and building the capacity of provincial and local government to replicate the most important success of Phayao Province.
2. The TICW project and ILO more general should use its influence to ensure that that coherent bodies are established at central government level to coordinate activities concerning trafficking, including those of the security forces.
3. Once an adequate knowledge basis (about abuses committed against migrant workers) is available (i.e. with the finalisation of the Mahidol University study about ‘demand’), the project’s efforts in receiving areas should be intensified. By developing an institutional focus at both national and provincial level on migrant children, the project should ensure that its direct assistance activities concerning migrant children who have been trafficked or who are being exploited are picked up by, and become a priority for, Thailand’s national programme to eradicate the worst forms of child labour.

9.14 Recommendations concerning Viet Nam

1. The management of TICW at sub-regional level should, with the assistance of the ILO office in Hanoi, tackle the issues surrounding what appeared to be the poor relations with DSEP and the misunderstandings and miscommunication which occurs on account of the two partners (the TICW project and DSEP) having quite different understandings of what the term ‘trafficking in women and children’ refers to.
2. In order to achieve ‘added value’, the evaluation team recommends that activities should be concentrated as much as possible in locations which are destinations for internal migrants, rather than in source areas. The knowledge base needed developing in destination areas, both about the types of abuse to which internal migrants are subjected and about ways of preventing such abuse. If necessary, the term ‘trafficking’ need not be applied to such cases, as long as useful activities are carried out.

9.15 Conclusion

This report started by mentioning the four principle themes which underlie the project’s approach: policy mainstreaming; awareness raising and advocacy; community empowerment; and promotion of safe migration and labour protection at destination.

The project has made progress on all four, but rather less on community empowerment and labour protection at destination than it might have liked by 2006. To ensure that the policies which the project promotes for mainstreaming during the remainder of the project are appropriate, it is important that efforts be intensified to incorporate the views of the project’s

beneficiaries in the design, monitoring and evaluation of project activities (community empowerment). It is also a priority to ensure that by the end of the project there is clear evidence to support the techniques recommended for replication by the project for reducing the vulnerability of migrants to being trafficked. While the project will certainly have brought immediate benefits to the beneficiaries of its direct assistance activities, its success can ultimately be judged by whether others pay attention to the lessons it has learned.

