

Innovative & Sustainable development work



Human trafficking is a global problem that is happening everywhere around the world, especially in South and South-East Asia. These regions are considered as core areas for human trafficking. In South Asia, 85 per cent of detected victims were trafficked for forced labour, and among these as many as 40 per cent were children. Local anti-human trafficking initiatives are mainly focusing on awareness raising on prevention of human trafficking, rather than on the root causes behind human trafficking. Hence, it is needed to learn and analyse from the local perspective of human trafficking in order to address the root causes efficiently.

In early 2018, ICC and other development organisations from Nepal, India, Bangladesh, and Thailand joined together with Interact to conduct a joint study on “Local experiences and perceptions of human trafficking in South and South-East Asia”, which has resulted in the report *"Beyond Awareness - learning from local experiences to move forward in fighting human trafficking"*.

Findings from this study have shown that root causes of human trafficking is linked to poverty, lack of knowledge, materialism & high aspirations, in addition to weak policy and law enforcement. Poverty is the most frequently mentioned factor by most of the respondents from each study location. The findings also identified a high vulnerability and risk for children and youth to become victims of human trafficking, e.g. by being deceived and exploited into child labour, kidnapping, forced begging, and organ trafficking. Moreover, the findings show that some parents themselves take their children to neighbouring countries, such as Vietnam, to beg out of poverty and to gain quick money. Existing local strategies are identified in the study, such as self-protection in families and communities, interventions by local authorities and NGOs, and a significant focus on information and awareness raising.

Data collected from ICC's target areas in Svay Rieng province is unique since local authorities, Commune Councils, Village Development Committees, Commune Committee for Women and Children, and

religious leaders are working actively in spreading information and reporting human trafficking cases. As a result, respondents stated that: *Human trafficking was high in the early years of the 2000's, but now there is less human trafficking because of better law enforcement and awareness raising.* However, some respondents believe that there is still room for improvement on law enforcement.

ICC is directly involved in anti-human trafficking via the ICC Trafficking Response project. Other ICC projects, such as VOTC and FAST, are partially involved in anti-human trafficking in their target areas. ICC does not only provide information and awareness raising on the issue of human trafficking, but ICC is also working directly with rights-holders and duty-bearers. This is done by working closely with local authorities, community based organisations and with children, youth and young adults. ICC will use the research report from Interact to elevate ICC's engagement and action in combating human trafficking in Cambodia.