



Tackling Fishing Trafficking

Budget: \$25,000 per year for three years. Year 2 began 1/7/19. Fully funded.

The Project:

This project assists vulnerable migrant workers and people trafficked for slave labour in the Thai fishing industry through deception, debt bondage, threats and violence. It helps to strengthen the criminal justice systems and improve multilateral enforcement mechanisms in Thailand and the source countries of Cambodia and Myanmar. Entrust supports the project through funding the equivalent of two local social workers (Aftercare Team) who provide support for men, women and children rescued from the fishing industry, from immediate care and assistance with legal processes, through to repatriation support to ensure safe and adequate services to restart their lives and avoid re-exploitation. Assessing cross-border issues and needs, and building relationships with local service providers are also key aspects.



Outcomes and Impact:

- The Aftercare Team continues to build the capacity of service providers (such as survivor shelters), as well as directly support rescue survivors. They provide onsite counselling and advocacy during rescue operations, individualised care to survivors, guide them through the legal system to pursue criminal accountability, support them as they repatriate to their home countries, identify gaps in social support services and strengthen relationships with government and community leaders.
- During the reporting period, five fishermen were rescued from forced labour and human trafficking. The suspect in the case is a local government official who owns the boats the men were forced to work on. The survivors and their families are now under protection at a Thai government shelter.
- Throughout the rescue process above, the Aftercare Team collaborated with other teams to ensure the wellbeing of the survivors and their families. Daily visits, food and necessities, and medical check-ups were provided during the transition to government shelters. Our partner has stayed in contact with them, helped with supplies during the COVID-19 lockdown situation and has worked with the shelter to devise care plans for them.
- Trauma-informed care training was run by the team in January for 25 Thai prosecutors, to help them identify trauma symptoms and better understand the impact of trauma on victims' mental state and behavior.
- In February, repatriation of a survivor from Ranong, Thailand, back to his home in Myanmar was facilitated by the Aftercare Team alongside NGO partners. Our partner's associate in Myanmar has followed up with a home visit and is pleased to report he is happy to be home, living in good conditions and has a job.

Vith's Story:

Vith, a farmer from Cambodia, is one of hundreds, if not thousands, of Cambodian men trafficked into the Thai fishing industry by a cross-border recruiting network. He was forced to work for six years on a fishing vessel, with no freedom to leave even when docked at port. He experienced physical abuse and harsh living conditions, with insufficient food and little rest. Knowing the captain kept a gun, he was too afraid to speak out. It wasn't until the vessel was intercepted by Indonesian authorities that he was reunited with his family and entered our partner's Aftercare program. He is now back helping his parents in the rice fields, finding odd jobs and saving up to get married to his fiancé.

Thank you for supporting the fight against trafficking to rescue people like Vith.